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PLAYS BY HENRIK IBSEN.

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THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY, AND OTHER PLAYS. BY HENRIK IBSEN. EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY HAVELOCK ELLIS.

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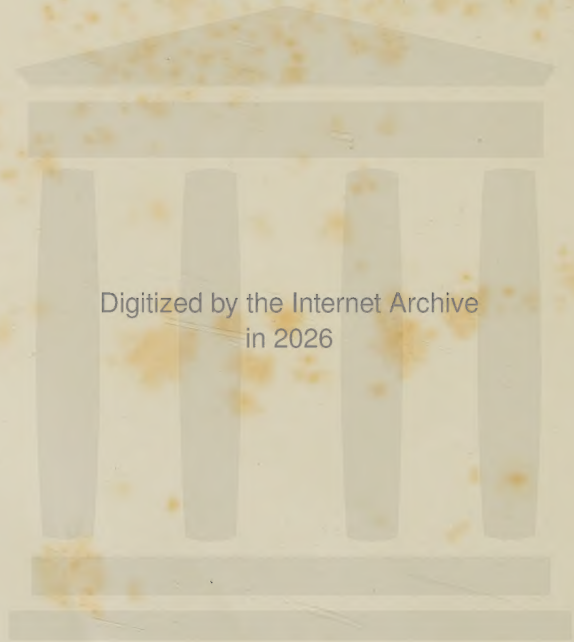

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PREFACE.

THE Scandinavian group of countries holds to-day a position not unlike that held at the beginning of the century by Germany. They speak, in various modified forms, a language which the rest of the world have regarded as little more than barbarous, and are regarded generally as an innocent and primitive folk. Yet they contain centres of intense literary activity; they have produced novels of a peculiarly fresh and penetrating realism; and they possess, moreover, a stage on which great literary works may be performed, and the burning questions of the modern world be scenically resolved. It is natural that Norway, with its historical past and literary traditions, should be the chief centre of this activity, and that a Norwegian should stand forth to-day as the chief figure of European significance that has appeared in the Teutonic world of art since Goethe.

To understand Norwegian art—whether in its popular music, with its extremes of melancholy or hilarity, or in its highly-developed literature—we must understand the peculiar character of the land which has produced this people. It is a land having, in its most characteristic regions, a year of but one day and night—the summer a perpetual warm sunlit day filled with the aroma of trees and plants, and the rest of the year a night of darkness and horror; a

land which is the extreme northern limit of European civilisation, on the outskirts of which the great primitive gods still dwell; and where elves and fairies and mermaids are still regarded, according to the expression of Jonas Lie, as tame domestic animals. Such an environment must work mightily on the spirit and temper of the race. As one of the persons in Björnson's *Over Œvne* observes—"There is something in Nature here which challenges whatever is extraordinary in us. Nature herself here goes beyond all ordinary measure. We have night nearly all the winter; we have day nearly all the summer, with the sun by day and by night above the horizon. You have seen it at night half-veiled by the mists from the sea; it often looks three, even four, times larger than usual. And then the play of colours on sky, sea and rock, from the most glowing red to the softest and most delicate yellow and white. And then the colours of the Northern Lights on the winter sky, with their more suppressed kind of wild pictures, yet full of unrest and for ever changing. Then the other wonders of Nature! These millions of sea-birds, and the wandering processions of fish, stretching for miles! These perpendicular cliffs that rise directly out of the sea! They are not like other mountains, and the Atlantic roars round their feet. And the ideas of the people are correspondingly unmeasured. Listen to their legends and stories."

So striking are the contrasts in the Norwegian character that they have been supposed to be due to the mingling of races; the fair-haired, blue-eyed Norwegian of the old Sagas, silent and deep-natured, being modified now (especially in the north) by the darker, brown-eyed Lapp, with his weakness of character, vivid imagination, and tendency to natural mysticism, and, again (especially in the east), by the daring, practical, energetic Finn.

However this may be, among the Norwegian poets and novelists various qualities often meet together in striking opposition; wild and fantastic imagination stands beside an exact realism and a loving grasp of nature; a tendency to mysticism and symbol beside a healthy naturalism. We find these characteristics variously combined in Ibsen; in Björnson, with his virile strength and generous emotions, amid which a mystic influence now and then appears; in Jonas Lie, with his subtle and delicate spirit, so intimately national; in Kielland, a realistic novelist of most dainty and delicate art, beneath which may be heard the sombre undertone of his sympathy with the weak and the oppressed. Of these writers, and others only less remarkable, one alone is at all well known in England, and even he is known exclusively by his early work, especially by that most delightful of peasant stories, *Arne*. In Germany the Scandinavian novelists and dramatists have received much attention, and are widely known through excellent and easily accessible translations. Yet our English speech is hardly less closely allied to the northern; while as to blood-relationship, our land is studded with easily recognisable Scandinavian colonies, whose dialects are still full of genuine Scandinavian words unknown to literary English. It is not likely that this indifference to the social, political, and literary history of our northern kinsmen will last much longer, and this little volume will, at all events, help to bring them nearer to us. The three plays here given, by which Ibsen is, for almost the first time, adequately presented to the English reader, have been selected because they seemed to be—with the exception of "A Doll's House," already translated, and "Rosmersholm," which will, I hope, soon follow—the most remarkable of his social dramas.

Henrik Ibsen* was born on the 20th of March 1828, at Skien, a small town on the south coast of Norway engaged in the export of timber,—which is floated down the streams from the highlands above,—and also noted as a centre of Pietistic religious influence. In this fir-scented town, at the head of a narrow fjord, between the mountains and the sea, an insignificant little wooden house is still shown as Ibsen's birthplace.† His father, Knud Ibsen, who occupied a middle-class position in Skien as a small merchant, had married Marie Cornelia Altenburg, whose father came over from North Germany; and Ibsen is thus a distinguished example of the exceptional power which frequently accrues to the children from the mixture of races in the parents. Of his childhood nothing is known; if we may judge from very slight indications, especially from his absence of allusion to this period, it was scarcely happy. He left school at the age of sixteen, provided, at all events, with a fair stock of Latin, to begin life as an apothecary's apprentice at the little seaport of Grimstad in the south of Arendal; his purpose being to go eventually to the University of Christiania to study medicine. In the leisure moments of his work he amused himself by writing extravagant satires on the citizens of Grimstad, and drawing carricatures. It was while reading Sallust and Cicero for his examination that he

* Many books and pamphlets dealing with his life and works have appeared in Denmark, Sweden, and Germany. The chief of these are Vasenius's *Henrik Ibsen, ett Skaldeporträtt*, Stockholm, 1882; Passarge's *Henrik Ibsen: Ein Beitrag zur neusten Geschichte der norwegischen Nationallitteratur*, Leipsic, 1883; and a book called *Henrik Ibsen*, 1828-1888, which has just been published at Copenhagen by H. Jaeger.

† Unless it was destroyed by the fire which burnt down nearly the whole of Skien last year.

conceived, and wrote at midnight, his first play, "Catilina." With the help of two enthusiastic young friends the tragedy was published and some thirty copies sold—a result which did not permit of the proposed tour in the East on which the three friends had decided to expend the profits of the sale. Ibsen was now in his twenty-second year, and he came up to Christiania to carry on his studies at the school of Heltberg, who seems to have had a singularly stimulating influence on the young men under his care. Here Ibsen was the comrade of Björnson, Jonas Lie, and others who have since become famous. At a later date Björnson condensed his youthful impression of his friend in two vigorous lines :—

> "Tense and lean, the colour of gypsum,
> Behind a vast coal-black beard, Henrik Ibsen."

The period now arrived at which Ibsen's career was definitely settled. He had been making several unsuccessful literary attempts at Christiania, having finally abandoned the intention to study medicine, when, in 1851, the famous violinist, Ole Bull, who has done so much to give artistic shape and energy to the modern Norwegian spirit, appointed him director of the National Theatre which he had recently established at Bergen. Ibsen's 'prentice hand was now trained by the writing of several dramas not included among his published works ; and, like Shakespeare and Molière in somewhat similar circumstances, he here acquired his mastery of the technical demands of dramatic form. In 1855 his apprenticeship may be said to have ended, and he produced "Fru Inger til Östratt" (Dame Inger of Östraat), an historical prose drama of great energy and concentration. In 1858 he married Susanna Thoresen, the daughter of a Bergen clergyman, whose

second wife, Magdalene Thoresen, is a well-known authoress. At the same period he was appointed artistic director of the Norwegian theatre at Christiania, exchanging posts with Björnson, who had just inaugurated the Norwegian peasant novel by the publication of *Synnöve Solbakken*. In 1864, having acquired the means, Ibsen found it desirable to quit the somewhat provincial and uncongenial atmosphere of his native country, and has since lived in Rome, in Ischia, and at other places, but mainly in Dresden or Munich, producing on an average a drama every two years. In 1885 he revisited Norway. Time had brought its revenges, and he was enthusiastically received everywhere. At Drontheim he made a remarkable speech to a club of working-men. "Mere democracy," he said, "cannot solve the social question. An element of aristocracy must be introduced into our life. Of course I do not mean the aristocracy of birth or of the purse, or even the aristocracy of intellect. I mean the aristocracy of character, of will, of mind. That only can free us. From two groups will this aristocracy I hope for come to our people —from our women and our workmen. The revolution in the social condition, now preparing in Europe, is chiefly concerned with the future of the workers and the women. In this I place all my hopes and expectations; for this I will work all my life and with all my strength." In private conversation, it is said, Ibsen describes himself as a Socialist, although he has not identified himself with any definite school of Socialism.

In personal appearance he is rather short, but impressive and very vigorous. He has a peculiarly broad and high forehead, with small, keen, blue-grey eyes, "which seem to penetrate to the heart of things." His firm and compressed mouth is characteristic of "the man of the iron will," as he

has been called by a fellow-countryman. Altogether it is a remarkable and significant face, clear-seeing and alert, with a decisive energy of will about it that none can fail to recognise. It is far indeed from the typical "pure, extravagant, yearning, questioning artist's face." It recalls, rather, the faces of some of our most distinguished surgeons; as is perhaps meet in the case of a writer who has used so skilful and daring a scalpel to cut to the core of social diseases. In society, although he likes talking to the common people, Ibsen is usually reserved and silent; or his conversation deals with the most ordinary topics. When, however, he is among intimate friends, he seems to have some resemblance to his own Dr. Stockmann.

Ibsen's dramas (excluding two or three which he no longer recognises) may be conveniently divided into three groups, which, in the case of the first two, merge into one another:—1. *Historical and Legendary Dramas, chiefly in Prose:* the youthful "Catilina" (written in 1850, but revised at a later period), which stands by itself, and contains the germ of much of his later work; "Fru Inger til Östraat" (Dame Inger of Östraat), 1855, an effective melodramatic play of great technical skill; "Gildet paa Solhaug" (The Feast at Solhaug), an historical play of the fourteenth century, written in 1855, and reprinted in 1883, with a preface explaining its genesis; "Hærmændene paa Helgeland" (The Warriors at Helgeland), 1858, a noble version of the Volsunga-Saga, in which the dramatist presents a vivid and human picture of the Viking period; "Kongs-emnerne" (The Pretenders), 1864, dealing with Norwegian history in the twelfth century; "Keiser og Galilæer" (Emperor and Galilean), finished in 1873, but begun many years earlier. 2. *Dramatic Poems:* "Kjærlighedens Komedie" (Love's Comedy), 1862; "Brand," 1866; "Peer Gynt," 1867.

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* It may be noted that this was the first of Ibsen's dramas to be translated into English, by Miss Catherine Ray, in 1876.

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"Love's Comedy," the earliest of the poems of the second group, is the first work in which Ibsen's characteristic tone appears, not again to vanish. It is a satire on the various conventional phases of love, exquisite in form but comparatively slight in texture. In "Brand" Ibsen produced the earliest of his masterpieces, a poem which, for imagination and sombre energy, stands alone. It is, perhaps, the most widely known of all his works; in Germany it has already found four translators, and we may reasonably hope that before long a translator will arise even in England. "Brand" is the tragedy of will and self-sacrifice in the service of the ideal—a narrow ideal, but less narrow, Ibsen seems sometimes to hint, than the ideals of most of us. The motto on which Brand acts in all the crises of his life is, "All or nothing;" and with him it means in every case the crushing of some human emotion or relationship for the fulfilment of a religious duty. Soon after the commencement of the poem Brand became the pastor of a gloomy little northern valley, between mountains and glaciers, into which the sun seldom penetrates. He is accompanied by his wife Agnes, a pathetic image of love and devotion. A child is born to them, who soon dies in this sun-forsaken valley. There are few passages in literature of more penetrating pathos than the scene in the fourth act in which, one Christmas eve, the first anniversary of the child's death, Brand persuades Agnes to give her Alf's clothes—the last loved relics—to a beggar-woman who comes to the door with her child during a snow-storm. Soon Agnes

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also dies. In the end, stoned by his flock, Brand makes his way, bleeding, up into the mountains. Here, amid the wild rocks and his own hallucinations, he is met by a mad girl who mistakes him for the thorn-crowned Christ. This scene, in which, overwhelmed at last by an avalanche, Brand dies amid his broken ideals, attains an imaginative height not elsewhere reached in modern literature, and for the like of which we have to look back to the great scene on the heath in "Lear." Here and elsewhere, however, Ibsen brings in supernatural voices, which scarcely heighten the natural grandeur of the scene, and which seem out of place altogether in a modern poem. "Brand" brings before us a wealth of figures and of discussions, carried on in brief, clear, musical, though irregular, metrical form, and it would be impossible to analyse so complex a work within moderate compass. The same is true of "Peer Gynt," Ibsen's next work. This is regarded in his own country as his most important achievement, for it is a great modern national epic, the Scandinavian "Faust." A successful attempt has even been made to represent it on the stage, the music being composed by Grieg. The name of its hero and many incidents in his career have their home in old Norwegian folk-lore, and Ibsen has himself declared that Peer Gynt is intended as the representative of the Norwegian people. Peer is the child of imagination who lives in a world in which fantasy and reality can scarcely be distinguished. He is an egotist with colossal ambitions; at the same time he is by no means wanting in worldly wisdom; he goes to America, and makes a large fortune (later on suddenly lost) by the importation of slaves and the exportation of idols to China, a trade which he reconciles to his conscience by opening up another branch of business for supplying missionaries (at a consider-

able profit) with Bibles and rum. The whole is a series of scenes and adventures, often fantastic or symbolical in character, always touched by that profound irony which is Ibsen's most marked feature. One scene is so original and penetrative that it stands alone in literature. It is that scene of peculiarly Norwegian essence in which Peer Gynt enters the hut in which his mother lies dying, with the fire on the hearth and the old tom-cat on a stool at the bottom of the bed. He talks to her in the tone of the days of childhood, reminding her how they used to play at driving to the fairy-tale castle of Soria Moria. He sits at the foot of the bed, throws a string round the stool on which the cat lies, takes a stick in his hand, imagines a journey to Heaven—the altercation with St. Peter at the gate, the deep bass voice of God declaring that Mother Aase shall enter free—and lulls her to death with the stories with which she had once lulled him to sleep. At a much later date in his career Peer finds himself in a madhouse at Cairo, where he is assured that his own guiding principle of the self-sufficiency of the individual, without regard for the actions or opinions of others, is carried out to its extreme limits. He is here acclaimed as emperor and crowned with a garland of straw. Thus are his dreams of empire fulfilled. In the end he returns, a white-haired old man, to be eagerly welcomed by the faithful Solveig, whom, as a girl, he had forsaken, and who is now an old woman, still waiting for him with the kingdom of love that he had missed. The poem ends with the picture of Solveig singing over her lover a cradle-song of death. The failure of an over-mastering imagination and weak will to attain the love that alone satisfies, that is the last lesson of this marvellous work, so full of manifold meaning.

It is certainly by the third and latest group—the Social

Dramas—that Ibsen has gained most enthusiastic partisans as well as many enemies. They are all written in mature life, and he has here devoted his early gained mastery of the technical requirements of the drama, as well as the later acquired experiences of men, to a keen criticism of the social life of to-day. He himself, it is said, regards these plays as his chief title to remembrance It is scarcely possible to say so much as this. Their significance to-day cannot be over-estimated ; but when our social conditions cease to correspond to Ibsen's vivid and ironic pictures, and the reforms which they indicate, it is probable that "Brand" and "Peer Gynt," with their more purely imaginative interest, will rank as the chief of his works. But it certainly does not befit us of to-day to complain that Ibsen has devoted his most mature art to work which has its chief significance to-day. That significance may be very easily set forth ; the spirit that works through Ibsen's latest dramas is the same that may be detected in his earliest, "Catiline ;" it is an eager insistance that the social environment shall not cramp the reasonable freedom of the individual, together with a passionately intense hatred of all those conventional lies which are commonly regarded as "the pillars of society." But this impulse that underlies nearly all Ibsen's dramas of the last group is always under the control of a great dramatic artist. The dialogue is brief and incisive ; every word tells, and none is superfluous ; there is no brilliant play of dialogue for its own sake, as in our own greatest master of prose comedy, Congreve. If there is fault to find in the construction of Ibsen's prose dramas, it lies in their richness of material ; the subsidiary episodes are frequently dramas in themselves, although duly subordinate to the main purpose of the play. The care lavished on the development and episodes of these dramas is equalled by

the reality and variety of the persons presented. These are never mere embodied "humours" or sarcastic caricatures; the terrible keenness of Ibsen's irony comes of the simple truth and moderation with which he describes these social humbugs who are yet so eminently reasonable and like ourselves. Every figure brought before us, even the most insignificant, is an organic and complex personality, to be recognised without trick or catchword.

"The Young Men's League," the earliest of the series, deals with the rise and progress of one Stensgaard. He is an essentially vulgar and commonplace man, whose ambition it is to gain political success. Clever he undoubtedly is, but at the same time short-sighted, conceited, absolutely wanting in tact. He is even unstable, save in the great central aim of his life, which he seeks to bring about by the formation of a compact majority of voters, of which the nucleus is the Young Men's League. Stensgaard is always at his best as an orator; he is a Numa Roumestan—genial, almost childishly open-hearted, with a flow of facile emotion and a great mastery of phrases. We leave him under a cloud of contempt, but nowise defeated; and we are given to understand that he is on his way to the highest offices of state. In this vivid and skilful portrait of the representative leader of semi-democratised societies, Ibsen has given his chief utterance on current political methods, and it is scarcely favourable. He realises that government by party mobs, each headed by a Stensgaard—a phase in the progress towards complete democratisation admirably illustrated in England to-day—is by no means altogether satisfactory. "A party," remarks Dr. Stockmann, in "An Enemy of Society," "is like a sausage-machine: it grinds all the heads together in one mash." Something more fundamental even than party government is needed, and in some words written

in 1870 Ibsen has briefly expressed what he conceives to be the pith of the matter:—

"The coming time—how all our notions will fall into the dust then! And truly it is high time. All that we have lived on up till now has been the remnants of the revolutionary dishes of the last century, and we have been long enough chewing these over and over again. Our ideas demand a new substance and a new interpretation. Liberty, equality and fraternity are no longer the same things that they were in the days of the blessed guillotine; but it is just this that the politicians will not understand, and that is why I hate them. These people only desire partial revolutions, revolutions in externals, in politics. But these are mere trifles. There is only one thing that avails—to revolutionise people's minds."

He is not an aristocrat of the school of Carlyle, eager to put everything beneath the foot of a Cromwell or a Bismarck. The great task for democracy is, as Rosmer says in "Rosmersholm," "to make every man in the land a nobleman." It is only by the creation of great men and women, by the enlargement to the utmost of the reasonable freedom of the individual, that the realisation of Democracy is possible. And herein, as in other fundamental matters, Ibsen is at one with the American, with whom he would appear at first sight to have little in common. "Where the men and women think lightly of the laws; . . where the populace rise at once against the never-ending audacity of elected persons; . . . where outside authority enters always after the precedence of inside authority; where the citizen is always the head and ideal; where children are taught to be laws to themselves; . . . there the great city stands!" exclaims Walt Whitman.

In "The Pillars of Society"—which was separated from "The Young Men's League" by the appearance of "Emperor and Galilean"—Ibsen pours delicious irony on

those conventional lies which are regarded as the foundations of social and domestic life. In this play also he presents us with one of the most eminent of his clergymen. Straamand in "Love's Comedy," Manders in "Ghosts," Rörlund here, with many minor clerical figures scattered through other plays, notwithstanding slight differences, are closely allied. The clergyman is for Ibsen the supreme representative and exponent of conventional morality. Yet the dramatist never falls into the mistake of some of his Scandinavian contemporaries, who make their clerical figures mere caricatures. Here, as always, it is because it is so reasonable and truthful that Ibsen's irony is so keen. Rörlund is honest and conscientious, but the thinnest veils of propriety are impenetrable to him; he can see nothing but the obvious and external aspects of morality; he is incapable of grasping a new idea, or of sympathising with any natural instinct or generous emotion; it is his part to give utterance, impressive with the sanction of religion, to the traditional maxims of the society he morally supports. Pastor Manders, in "Ghosts," is less fluent than Rörlund, and of stronger character. His training and experience have fitted him to deal in all dignity with the proprieties and conventions of social morality; but when he is in the presence of the realities of life, or when a generous human thought or emotion flashes out before him, he shrinks back shocked and cowed. He is then, as Mrs. Alving says, nothing but a great child. That Ibsen is, in his clerical personages, as some have said, covertly attacking Protestantism, it is not necessary to assert. It is the traditional morality, of which the priesthood everywhere are the chief and authorised exponents, with which he is chiefly concerned. His attitude towards Christianity generally we may perhaps gather from the intensity of feeling with which

Julian, in "Emperor and Galilean," expresses his passionate repugnance to its doctrine of the evil of human nature and its policy of suppression. "You can never understand it, you," he continues, "who have never been in the power of this God-Man. It is more than a doctrine which he has spread over the world; it is a charm which has fettered the senses. Whoever falls once into his hands never becomes quite free again. We are like vines planted in a foreign, unsuitable soil; plant us elsewhere and we shall develop; we degenerate in this new earth."

"A Doll's House" contains Ibsen's most elaborate portrait of a woman, and it is his chief contribution to the elucidation of the questions relating to the social functions and position of women in the modern world. It is the tragedy of marriage, and on this ground it has excited much discussion, and is perhaps the most widely known of Ibsen's social dramas.* As a work of art it is probably the most perfect of them. He has here thrown off the last fragments of that conventionality in treatment which frequently mars the two previous plays, and has reached the full development of his own style. The play is an organic whole, all its parts are intimately bound together, and every step in the development is vital and inevitable. Nora herself, the occupant of the doll's house, is a being whose adult instincts have been temporarily arrested by the influences which have made her an overgrown child. She is the daughter of a frivolous official of doubtful honesty; she has been fed on those maxims of conventional morality of which Rörlund is so able an exponent; and her chief recreation has been in the servants' room. She is now a mother, and the wife of a man who

* In England it is at present best known through Miss Lord's translation.

shields her carefully from all contact with the world. He refrains from sharing with her his work or his troubles; he fosters all her childish instincts; she is a source of enjoyment to him, a precious toy. He is a man of æsthetic tastes, and his love for her has something of the delight that one takes in a work of art. Nora's conduct is the natural outcome of her training and experience. She tells lies with facility; she flirts almost recklessly to attain her own ends; when money is concerned her conceptions of right are so elementary that she forges her father's name. But she acts from the impulses of a loving heart; her motives are always good; she is not conscious of guilt. Her education in life has not led her beyond the stage of the affectionate child with no sense of responsibility. But the higher instincts are latent within her; and they awake when the light of day at length penetrates her doll's house, and she learns the judgment of the world, of which her husband now stands forth as the stern interpreter. In the clash and shock of that moment she realises that her marriage has been no marriage, that she has been living all these years with a "strange man," and that she is no fit mother for her children. She leaves her home, not to return until, as she says, to live with her husband will be a real marriage. Will she ever return?—The Norwegian poets, it has been said, like to end their dramas, as such end in life, with a note of interrogation.

Nora is one of a group of women, more or less highly developed, who are distributed throughout Ibsen's later plays. They stand, in their stagnant conventional environment, as, either instinctively or intelligently, actually or potentially, the representatives of freedom and truth, containing the promise of a new social order. The men in these plays, who are able to estimate their social surroundings

at a just value, have mostly been wounded or paralysed in the battle of life; they stand by, half-cynical, and are content to be merely spectators. But the women—Selma, Lona, Nora, Mrs. Alving, Petra, Rebecca—are full of unconquerable energy. There is a new life in their breasts that surges, often tumultuously, into very practical expression.

As "The Doll's House" is the tragedy of marriage, so "Ghosts" is the tragedy of heredity. Oswald Alving, in this powerful play, is the son of a drunken and dissolute father, but his mother has brought him up, away from home, in entire ignorance of this fact. Mrs. Alving is a woman of energy and intellect, who has managed the estate, and devoted herself successfully to the task of creating an artificial odour of sanctity around the memory of her late husband. At the same time she has been gradually throwing aside the precepts of the morality in which she has been educated, and has learned to think for herself. When Oswald returns home, in reality dying of disease that has been latent from his birth, he seems to her the ghost of his father. His own life has been free from excess, but he now drinks too much; and he begins to make love to the girl who is really his half-sister, exactly as his father had done to her mother in the same place. The scene finally closes over the first clear signs of his madness. The irony of the play is chiefly brought about by the involuntary agency of Pastor Manders, the consummate flower of conventional morality, and in the few hours which the action covers the tragedy of heredity is slowly and relentlessly unfolded, with the vanity of all efforts to conceal or suppress the great natural forces of life. We realise here, better, perhaps, than elsewhere, how Ibsen has absorbed the scientific influences of his time, the attitude of unlimited simplicity and trust in

the face of reality. "I almost think," Mrs. Alving says, "that we are all of us ghosts, Pastor Manders. It is not only what we have inherited from our father and mother that 'walks' in us. It is all sorts of dead ideas and lifeless old beliefs and so forth. They have no vitality, but they cling to us all the same, and we can't get rid of them. Whenever I take up a newspaper I seem to see ghosts gliding between the lines. There must be ghosts all the country over, as thick as the sand of the sea." There is the absolute acceptance of facts, however disagreeable. But, beside it, is the hope that lies in the skilful probing of the wound that the ignorant have foolishly smothered up; the hope also that lies in a glad trust of nature and of natural instincts. "Ghosts" is perhaps the greatest of all Ibsen's plays; nowhere else can we feel so strong and invigorating a breath of new life.

"An Enemy of Society" is closely connected in its origin with "Ghosts." When "Ghosts" was published it aroused fierce antagonism. Such a subject was not suited, it was said, to artistic treatment. The discussion was foolish enough; the wise saying of Goethe still remains true, that "*no* real circumstance is unpoetic so long as the poet knows how to use it." All the worthy people, however, in whose name Pastor Manders is entitled to speak, declared, further, that the play was immoral—as it certainly is from their point of view—and it was some time before its first representation on the stage, with the distinguished northern actor, Lindberg, in the part of Oswald.* Ibsen had expected a storm, but

* Like most things that begin by arousing opposition, "Ghosts" is becoming widely known and appreciated. In Germany it has been acted by the Meiningen and other companies; in Paris it is now about to be produced at the Théâtre Libre; in time, probably, it will reach England.

the storm was even greater than he had anticipated; and it has been supposed that in the history of Dr. Stockmann he has given an artistic version of his own experiences at this time. There can be little doubt that this surmise is correct, and it is pleasant that the only figure in these plays that we can intimately associate with Ibsen himself is that of the manly and genial Stockmann. He is by no means an ideal figure: he is very real and human, with all sorts of human weaknesses; by temperament and scientific education he is unable to hold his peace when he has made a great discovery affecting the well-being of society; and in his own family circle is always blurting out nakedly his opinions of everything and everybody. When he discovers that the water at the Baths, of which he is the medical director, and which are the chief cause of the town's prosperity, are infected and producing disastrous results to the invalids, he resolves that the matter shall at once be made known and remedied. It is in the shock of the universal disapprobation that this resolution arouses that our genial and homely doctor is lifted into heroism, and becomes the mouthpiece of truths with far-reaching significance. The great scene in the fourth act, in which he calls a public meeting as the only remaining way to make his discovery public, and, amid general clamour, sets forth his opinions, is one of the most powerful and genuinely dramatic that Ibsen has ever written. It adds to the interest of the scene when we realise that Stockmann's speech exactly applies to the position of the dramatist. Stockmann gains a moral victory, but the position of himself and his family in the town is ruined; he resolves to remain there, however, teaching ragamuffin children and doctoring the poor gratuitously, declaring at the end that "the strongest man upon earth is he who stands most alone."

Alone for the moment only: Stockmann's action was genuinely social, prompted by genuinely social motives; and the strength of his position lies in the prospect of his eventual success.

"The Wild Duck" is, as a drama, the least remarkable of Ibsen's plays of this group. There is no central personage who absorbs our attention, and no great situation. For the first time also we detect a certain tendency to mannerism, and the dramatist's love of symbolism, here centred in the wild duck, becomes obtrusive and disturbing. Yet this play has a distinct and peculiar interest for the student of Ibsen's works. The satirist who has so keenly pursued others has never spared himself; in the lines that he has set at the end of the charming little volume in which he has collected his poems, he declares that, "to write poetry is to hold a doomsday over oneself." Or, as he has elsewhere expressed it—"All that I have written corresponds to something that I have lived through, if not actually experienced. Every new poem has served as a spiritual process of emancipation and purification." In both "Brand" and "Peer Gynt" we may detect this process. Of late years, the chief accusation against Ibsen has been that he is an idealist making impossible claims on life; although, in face of the robust naturalism of "Ghosts," it is not necessary to do more than point out that the charge is hardly accurate. In "The Wild Duck" Ibsen has set himself on the side of his enemies, and written, as a kind of anti-mask to "Nora" and "The Pillars of Society," a play in which, from the standpoint to which the dramatist has accustomed us, everything is topsy-turvy. Gregory Werle is a young man possessing something of the reckless will-power of Brand, who is devoted "to the claims of the ideal," and who is doubtless an enthusiastic student of Ibsen's social

dramas. On returning home after a long absence he learns that his father has provided for a cast-off mistress by marrying her to an unsuspecting man, who is an old friend of Gregory's. He resolves at once that it is his duty at all costs to destroy the element of falsehood in this household, and to lay the foundations of a true marriage. His interference ends in disaster; the weak average human being fails to respond properly to "the claims of the ideal;" while Werle's father, the chief pillar of conventional society in the play, spontaneously forms a true marriage, founded on mutual confessions and mutual trust. The usually drunken doctor, with whom the word of reason seems generally to rest throughout, and who regards "ideals" and "lies"—which, however, he elsewhere terms "the stimulating principle in life"—as synonymous, asserts at the end that "life would be quite good if we might be delivered from those dear fanatics who rush into our houses with their ideal claims." That is the conclusion of a play which, while, as we have seen, it may be regarded, not quite unfairly, as a burlesque of possible deductions from the earlier plays, witnesses also, like "Ghosts," to Ibsen's profound conviction that all vital development must be spontaneous and from within, conditioned by the nature of the individual.

In "Rosmersholm," Ibsen's latest play*, social questions have passed into the background: they are present, indeed, throughout; and to some extent they cause the tragedy of the drama, as the numberless threads that bind a man to his past, and that cut and oppress him when he strives to take a step forward. But on this grey background the passionate figure of Rebecca West forms a vivid and highly-wrought portrait. Ibsen has rarely shown such intimate

* A new one is expected this year.

interest in the development of passion. The whole life and soul of this ardent, silent woman, whom we see in the first scene quietly working at her crotchet while the housekeeper prepares the supper, are gradually revealed to us in brief flashes of light between the subsidiary episodes, until at last she ascends and disappears down the inevitable path to the mill-stream. The touches which complete this picture are too many and too subtle to allow of analysis; in the last scene Ibsen's concentrated prose reaches as high a pitch of emotional intensity as he has ever cared to attain.

The men of our own great dramatic period wrote plays which are the expression of mere gladness of heart and childlike pleasure in the splendid and various spectacle of the world. Hamlet and Falstaff, the tragic De Flores and the comic Simon Eyre—they are all merely parts of the play. It is all play. The breath of Ariosto's long song of delight, and Boccaccio's virile joy in life, was still on these men, and for the organisation of society, or even for the development and fate of the individual, save as a spectacle, they took little thought. In the modern world this is no longer possible, rather, it is only possible for an occasional individual, who is compelled to turn his back on the world. Ibsen, like Aristophanes, like Molière, and like Dumas to-day, has given all his mature art and his knowledge of life and men to the service of ideas. "Overthrowing society means an inverted pyramid getting straight"—one of the audacious sayings of James Hinton—might be placed as a motto on the title-page of all Ibsen's later plays. His work through out is the expression of a great soul crushed by the weight of an antagonistic social environment into utterance that has caused him to be regarded as the most revolutionary of modern writers.

An artist and thinker, whose gigantic strength has been

nourished chiefly in solitude, whose works have been, as he himself says in one of his poems, "deeds of night," written from afar, can never be genuinely popular. Everything that he writes is received in his own country with attention and controversy: but he is mistaken for a cynic and pessimist; he is not loved in Norway as Björnson is loved, although Björnson, in the fruitful dramatic activity of his second period, has but followed in Ibsen's steps;—just as Goethe was never so well understood and appreciated as Schiller. Björnson, with his genial exuberance, his popular sympathies and hopes, never too far in advance of his fellows, invigorates and refreshes like one of the forces of nature. He represents the summer side of his country, in its bright warmth and fragrance. Ibsen, standing alone in the darkness in front, absorbed in the problems of human life, indifferent to the aspects of external nature, has closer affinities to the stern winter-night of Norway. But there is a mighty energy in this man's work. The ideas and instincts, developed in silence, which inspire his art, are of the kind that penetrate men's minds slowly. Yet they penetrate surely, and are proclaimed at length in the market-place.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

NOTE.

Of the three dramas presented to the reader in this volume, two have not previously been translated into English; a translation of the third has only appeared in a magazine. Mr. William Archer has presented to us the translation of "The Pillars of Society," which he had by him in *MS.*, and which he has revised for this volume; his name will be a sufficient guarantee of the ability and enthusiasm which he has brought to this labour of love. To Mr. Archer also we are indebted for a most careful revision of "Ghosts." The translation is to some extent founded on that of Miss Lord (who had kindly given me permission to use her translation), which appeared in *To-Day* a few years ago; it is, however, practically new. To Mrs. Eleanor Marx Aveling is owing the skilful version of "An Enemy of Society," perhaps the most difficult of Ibsen's social dramas to translate.

H. F.

THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY.

CHARACTERS.

CONSUL BERNICK.
MRS. BERNICK, *his wife.*
OLAF, *their son, a boy of thirteen.*
MISS BERNICK (MARTHA), *the Consul's sister.*
JOHAN TÖNNESEN, *Mrs. Bernick's younger brother.*
MISS HESSEL, *her elder step-sister* (LONA).
HILMAR TÖNNESEN, *Mrs. Bernick's cousin.*
RECTOR RÖRLUND.*
RUMMEL, VIGELAND, SANDSTAD, } *Merchants.*
DINA DORF, *a young girl living in the Consul's house.*
KRAP, *the Consul's clerk.*
SHIPBUILDER AUNE.
MRS. RUMMEL.
MRS. POSTMASTER HOLT.
MRS. DOCTOR LYNGE.
MISS RUMMEL.
MISS HOLT.

Townspeople and others, foreign sailors, steamboat passengers, etc.

The action takes place in Consul Bernick's house, in a small Norwegian coast town.

* In the original, "Adjunkt" or Assistant.

[TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.—The title of the original is "Samfundets Stötter,' literally "Society's Pillars." In the text the word "Samfund" has sometimes been translated "society," sometimes "community." The noun "Stötte," a pillar, has for its correlative the verb "at stötte," to support; so that the English phrase, "to support society," represents the Norwegian "at stötte Samfundet." The reader may bear in mind, then, that this phrase is, in the original, a direct allusion to the title of the play.]

THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY:

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS.

ACT I.

A large garden-room in CONSUL BERNICK'S *house. In front, to the left, a door leads into the Consul's office; farther back, in the same wall, a similar door. In the middle of the opposite wall is a large entrance door. The wall in the background is almost entirely composed of plate-glass, with an open door-way leading to a broad flight of steps, over which a sun-shade is let down. Beyond the steps a part of the garden can be seen, shut in by a trellis-fence with a little gate. On the other side of the fence is a street consisting of small brightly-painted wooden houses. It is summer and the sun shines warmly. Now and then people pass along the street: they stop and speak to each other: customers come and go at the little corner-shop, and so forth.*

In the garden-room a number of ladies are gathered round a table. At the head of the table sits MRS. BERNICK. *On her left sit* MRS. HOLT *and her daughter: next to them,* MRS. *and* MISS RUMMEL. *On* MRS. BERNICK'S *right sit* MRS. LYNGE, MISS BERNICK (MARTHA), *and* DINA DORF. *All the ladies are busy sewing. On the table lie large heaps of half-finished and cut-out linen, and other articles of clothing. Further back, at a little table on which are two flower-pots and a glass of* eau sucré, *sits* RECTOR RÖRLUND.

reading from a book with gilt edges, a word here and there being heard by the audience. Out in the garden OLAF BERNICK *is running about, shooting at marks with a cross-bow.*

Presently SHIPBUILDER AUNE *enters quietly by the door on the right. The reading is stopped for a moment;* MRS. BERNICK *nods to him and points to the left-hand door.* AUNE *goes quietly to the Consul's door and knocks once or twice, softly.* KRAP, *the Consul's clerk, opens the door and comes out with his hat in his hand and papers under his arm.*

Krap. Oh, it's you that were knocking!

Aune. The Consul sent for me.

Krap. Yes; but he can't see you just now; he has commissioned me——

Aune. You? I would much rather——

Krap. Commissioned me to tell you this: You must stop these Saturday lectures to the workmen.

Aune. Indeed? I thought I might use my leisure time——

Krap. You must not use your leisure time to make the men useless in work-time. Last Saturday you must needs talk of the harm our new machines and new method of work will cause to the workmen. Why do you do so?

Aune. I do it to support society.

Krap. That's a strange idea! The Consul says it's undermining society.

Aune. My "society" is not the Consul's "society," Mr. Krap! As foreman of the Industrial Society, I have to——

Krap. Your first duty is as foreman of Consul Bernick's shipyard. Your first duty is to the society called Bernick & Co., for by it we all live.—Well, now you know what the Consul had to say to you.

Aune. The Consul would have said it differently, Mr Krap! But I know well enough what I have to thank for this. It's that cursed American that's put in for repairs. These people think work can be done here as they do it over there, and that——

Krap. Yes, yes—I have no time to go into generalities. You now know the Consul's wishes, and that's enough. Now you'd better go down to the yard again; you're sure to be wanted; I shall be down myself presently.—I beg your pardon, ladies!

[*He bows, and goes out through the garden and down the street.* AUNE *goes quietly out to the right.* RECTOR RÖRLUND, *who during the whole of the foregoing conversation has continued reading, presently closes the book with a bang, as if he had finished it.*]

Rörlund. There, my dear ladies, that is the end of it.

Mrs. Rummel. Oh, what an instructive tale!

Mrs. Holt. And so moral!

Mrs. Bernick. Such a book really gives one a great deal to think over.

Rörlund. Yes—it forms a refreshing contrast to what we unhappily see every day, both in newspapers and magazines. The gilded and rouged outside, flaunted by the great communities—what does it really conceal? Hollowness and rottenness, if I may say so. They have no moral foundation under their feet. In one word—they are whited sepulchres, these great communities, nowadays.

Mrs. Holt. Too true! too true!

Mrs. Rummel. We have only to look at the crew of the American ship which is lying here just now.

Rörlund. Oh, I won't speak of such scum of humanity. But even in the higher classes—how do matters stand there?

Doubt and fermenting restlessness on every side; the mind unsettled, and insecurity in all relations of life. See how the family is undermined over there!—how a brazen spirit of destruction is attacking the most vital truths!

Dina [*without looking up*]. But are not many great things done there too?

Rörlund. Great things?—I don't understand.

Mrs. Holt. [*astonished.*] Good heavens, Dina——!

Mrs. Rummel [*at the same time*]. Oh, Dina, how can you?

Rörlund. I don't think it would be for our good if such "great things" became common among us. No—we at home here ought to thank God that things are as they are with us. Of course a tare now and then springs up among the wheat, alas! but we honestly do our best to weed it out. What we have to do, ladies, is to keep society pure—to exclude from it all the untried elements which an impatient age would force upon us.

Mrs. Holt. And of these there are more than enough, unhappily.

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, last year we only escaped by a hair's-breath having a railroad carried through the town.

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, Karsten managed to block the way.

Rörlund. Providentially, Mrs. Bernick! You may be sure that your husband was a tool in a higher hand when he refused to support that scheme.

Mrs. Bernick. And yet the papers said such horrid things about him! But we are quite forgetting to thank you, my dear Rector. It is really more than kind of you to sacrifice so much of your time to us.

Rörlund. Oh, not at all; now, in the holidays——

Mrs. Bernick. Yes, yes, but it is a sacrifice nevertheless.

Rörlund (*drawing his chair nearer*). Don't speak of it, my dear lady. Do not all of you make sacrifices for a good cause? And do you not make them willingly and gladly? The Lapsed and Lost, for whom we are working, are like wounded soldiers on a battle-field; you, ladies, are the Red Cross Guild, the sisters of mercy, who pick lint for these unhappy sufferers, tie the bandages gently round the wounds, dress, and heal them——

Mrs. Bernick. It must be a great blessing to be able to see everything in such a beautiful light.

Rörlund. The gift is largely inborn; but it can also be acquired. The great point is to see things in the light of an earnest mission. What do *you* say, Miss Bernick? Do you not find that you have, as it were, firmer ground under your feet since you have given up your life to your school-work?

Martha. I scarcely know what to say. Often when I am in the school-room I wish I were far out upon the stormy sea.

Rörlund. Yes, yes, that is temptation, my dear Miss Bernick. You must bar the door against such an unquiet guest. The stormy sea—of course you do not mean that literally; you mean the great billowing world, where so many are wrecked. And do you really think so much of the life you hear rushing and roaring outside? Just look out into the street. There people go about in the burning sunshine, toiling and moiling over their paltry affairs. Ours, surely, is the better part, as we sit in the cool shadow, and turn our backs toward the side from which distraction comes.

Martha. Yes, I suppose you are quite right——

Rörlund. And in a house like this—in a good and pure home, where the Family is seen in its fairest shape—where

peace and unity reign—— [*To Mrs. Bernick*]. What are you listening to, Mrs. Bernick?

Mrs. Bernick [*who has turned towards the door of the Consul's room*]. How loud they are speaking in there!

Rörlund. Is there anything particular going on?

Mrs. Bernick. I don't know. I can hear there is someone with my husband.

[HILMAR TÖNNESEN, *with a cigar in his mouth, comes in by the door to the right, but stops on seeing so many ladies.*]

Hilmar. Oh, I beg pardon——[*turning to go.*]

Mrs. Bernick. Come in, Hilmar, come in; you are not disturbing us. Do you want anything?

Hilmar. No, I only looked in in passing. Good morning, ladies. [*To Mrs. Bernick*]. Well, what's going to come of it?

Mrs. Bernick. Of what?

Hilmar. You know Bernick has called a cabinet council.

Mrs. Bernick. Indeed! What is it about?

Hilmar. Oh, it's this railway nonsense again.

Mrs. Rummel. No! Is it possible?

Mrs. Bernick. Poor Karsten, is he to have all that worry again——

Rörlund. But how are we to find rhyme or reason in this, Mr. Tönnesen? Consul Bernick made it plainly understood last year, that he would have no railway here.

Hilmar. Yes, I thought so too; but I met Krap just now, and he told me that the railway question was to the fore again, and that Bernick was holding a conference with three of our capitalists.

Mrs. Rummel. I was sure I heard Rummel's voice.

Hilmar. Yes. Mr. Rummel is there, of course, and

Sandstad and Michael Vigeland—"Holy Michael," as they call him.

Rörlund. Hm,——

Hilmar. I beg your pardon, Rector.

Mrs. Bernick. Just when everything was so nice and quiet too!

Hilmar. Well, I, for my part, have no objection to their beginning their bickerings again. It's a variety at least.

Rörlund. I think we could get on without that sort of variety.

Hilmar. It depends upon one's constitution. Some natures crave for a Titanic struggle now and then. But provincial life, worse luck, offers little in that way, and it is not every one that can——[*turning over the leaves of Rörlund's book*]. *Woman as the Servant of Society*—what sort of rubbish is this?

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, Hilmar; you mustn't say that. You have surely not read the book.

Hilmar. No; and I don't intend to.

Mrs. Bernick. You don't seem well to-day.

Hilmar. No, I am not.

Mrs. Bernick. Perhaps you didn't sleep well last night.

Hilmar. No; I slept very badly. I took a walk last evening for the sake of my health. Then I went to the club, and read an account of a polar expedition. There is something invigorating in following men in their struggle with the elements.

Mrs. Rummel. But it does not seem to have agreed with you, Mr. Tönnesen?

Hilmar. No, it didn't agree with me at all. I lay tossing all night half-asleep, and dreamt I was chased by a horrible walrus.

Olaf [*comes up the garden steps*]. Have you been chased by a walrus, Uncle?

Hilmar. I dreamt it, little stupid! But do you still go playing with that ridiculous bow? Why don't you get hold of a proper gun?

Olaf. I should like to very much, but——

Hilmar. There would be some sense in a gun; it braces the nerves.

Olaf. And then I could shoot bears, Uncle—but father won't give me leave.

Mrs. Bernick. You really mustn't put such ideas into his head, Hilmar.

Hilmar. Hm—that's the rising generation nowadays! There's great talk of doing, and, Heaven help us!—it all ends in play after all; no one has any faith in the discipline that lies in looking danger manfully in the face. Don't stand and point at me with your bow, stupid; it might go off.

Olaf. No, Uncle, there's no bolt in it.

Hilmar. How do you know? There may very likely be a bolt in it. Take it away, I tell you. I'd like to know why you've never gone over to America in one of your father's ships? There you could see a buffalo-hunt or a fight with the red-skins.

Mrs. Bernick. But Hilmar——

Olaf. I should like to very much, Uncle; and then, perhaps, I might meet Uncle Johan and Aunt Lona.

Hilmar. Hm—don't talk nonsense.

Mrs. Bernick. Now you can go down the garden again, Olaf.

Olaf. May I go out into the street too, mother?

Mrs. Bernick. Yes, but take care not to go too far. [*Olaf runs out through the garden gate.*]

Rörlund. You should not put such notions into the child's head, Mr. Tönnesen.

Hilmar. No, of course, he's to be a mere stick-in-the-mud, like so many others.

Rörlund. But why don't you go over yourself?

Hilmar. I? With my health? Of course no one here makes any allowance for that. But besides—one has certain duties towards the society one belongs to. There must be *one* person to hold high the banner of the ideal. Ugh, there he's shouting again!

The Ladies. Who's shouting?

Hilmar. Oh, I don't know. They're rather loud-voiced in there, and it makes me so nervous.

Mrs. Rummel. It is probably my husband, Mr. Tönnesen; but you must remember he is so accustomed to speak to great assemblies.

Rörlund. The others are not whispering either, it seems to me.

Hilmar. No, sure enough, when it's a question of the pocket, then——; everything here ends in paltry material calculations. Ugh!

Mrs. Bernick. At least that is better than formerly, when everything ended in dissipation.

Mrs. Lynge. Used things really to be so bad here?

Mrs. Rummel. They were indeed, Mrs. Lynge. You may think yourself lucky that you didn't live here then.

Mrs. Holt. Yes, there has certainly been a great change! When I think of the time when I was a girl——

Mrs. Rummel. Oh, only think of fourteen or fifteen years ago—Heaven help us, what a life it was! There was both a dancing club and a music club——

Martha. And the dramatic club—I remember it so well.

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, it was there your play was acted, Mr. Tönnesen.

Hilmar [*in the background*]. What, what——?

Rörlund. Mr. Tönnesen's play?

Mrs. Rummel. Yes; that was long before you came here, Rector. Besides, it only ran one night.

Mrs. Lynge. Was it not in that play that you told me you played the heroine, Mrs. Rummel?

Mrs. Rummel [*glancing at the Rector*]. I? I really don't remember, Mrs. Lynge. But I remember too well all the noisy gaiety that went on among families.

Mrs. Holt. Yes, I actually know houses where two great dinner parties were given in one week.

Mrs. Lynge. And then there was a company of strolling actors, I have heard.

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, that was the worst of all——

Mrs. Holt [*uneasily*]. Hm, hm——

Mrs. Rummel. Oh, actors did you say? No, I remember nothing about them.

Mrs. Lynge. Why, I was told that these people played such a lot of pranks. What was the truth of the matter?

Mrs. Rummel. Oh, it was nothing at all, Mrs. Lynge.

Mrs. Holt. Dina, dear, hand me that piece of linen, please.

Mrs. Bernick [*at the same time*]. Dina, my love, go out and ask Katrina to bring in the coffee.

Martha. I'll go with you, Dina.

[DINA *and* MARTHA *go out by the furthest back-door on the left.*]

Mrs. Bernick [*rising*]. And you must excuse me for a moment, ladies; I think we had better take our coffee outside.

[*She goes down the garden-steps and begins arranging a table;* RÖRLUND *stands in the doorway talking to her.* HILMAR *sits outside smoking.*]

Mrs. Rummel [*softly*]. Oh dear, Mrs. Lynge, how you frightened me!

Mrs. Lynge. I?

Mrs. Holt. Yes; but you yourself began it, Mrs. Rummel.

Mrs. Rummel. I? Oh, how can you say so, Mrs. Holt? Not a single word came from me.

Mrs. Lynge. But what is it all about?

Mrs. Rummel. How could you begin to talk about——! Only think—did you not see that Dina was in the room?

Mrs. Lynge. Why, bless me! is there anything the matter with——?

Mrs. Holt. Here, in this house, too! Do you not know, then, that it was Mrs. Bernick's brother——?

Mrs. Lynge. What about him? I know nothing whatever about it, I've only just come——

Mrs. Rummel. Then you haven't heard that——? Hm—— [*To her daughter*] You can go down the garden for a little, Hilda.

Mrs. Holt. You go too, Netta. And be sure you behave very kindly to poor Dina when she comes.

[MISS RUMMEL *and* MISS HOLT *go out into the garden.*]

Mrs. Lynge. Well, what about Mrs. Bernick's brother?

Mrs. Rummel. Don't you know he was the hero of the scandal?

Mrs. Lynge. Mr. Hilmar the hero of a scandal!

Mrs. Rummel. No, no, Hilmar is her cousin, Mrs. Lynge. I am talking of her brother——

Mrs. Holt. The Prodigal Tönnesen——

Mrs. Rummel. Johan was his name. He ran away to America.

Mrs. Holt. Had to run away, you understand.

Mrs. Lynge. Then the scandal was about him?

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, it was a sort of—what shall I call it? —a sort of—with Dina's mother. Oh, I remember it as if it were yesterday. Johan Tönnesen was in old Mrs. Bernick's office; Karsten Bernick had just come home from Paris—he wasn't engaged yet——

Mrs. Lynge. Yes, but the scandal——?

Mrs. Rummel. Well, you see, that winter Möller's comedy company was in the town.

Mrs. Holt. And in the company was Dorf, the actor, and his wife. All the young men were mad about her.

Mrs. Rummel. Yes—Heaven knows how they could think her pretty. But one evening Dorf came home very late——

Mrs. Holt. And quite unexpectedly.

Mrs. Rummel. And there he found—no, really I'm ashamed to tell you.

Mrs. Holt. Why, you know, Mrs. Rummel, he found nothing, for the door was locked on the inside.

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, that's what I say—he found the door locked. And only think! the person that was inside had to jump out at the window.

Mrs. Holt. Right from the attic window.

Mrs. Lynge. And it was Mrs. Bernick's brother?

Mrs. Rummel. Of course it was.

Mrs. Lynge. And that was why he ran off to America?

Mrs. Holt. He had to run, you may be sure.

Mrs. Rummel. For afterwards something else was found out, that was almost as bad. Only think, he had been playing tricks with the cash-box——

Mrs. Holt. But, after all, no one knows exactly about that, Mrs Rummel; perhaps it was a false report.

Mrs. Rummel. Well, I really must say——! Was it not known over the whole town? For that matter, wasn't old

Mrs. Bernick almost bankrupt? Rummel himself has told me that. But Heaven forbid *I* should say anything!

Mrs. Holt. Well, the money didn't go to Madame Dorf at any rate, for she——

Mrs. Lynge. Yes, what became of Dina's parents afterwards?

Mrs. Rummel. Oh, Dorf deserted both his wife and his child. But Madame was impudent enough to remain here a whole year. She did not dare to show herself in the theatre again; but she made her living by washing and sewing——

Mrs. Holt. And she tried to set up a dancing school.

Mrs. Rummel. Of course it wouldn't do. What parents would trust their children with such a person as that? But it didn't last long; the fine Madam wasn't accustomed to work, you see; her chest became affected, and she died.

Mrs. Lynge. Well, that's really a horrible story!

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, you may believe it has been a terrible thing for the Bernicks. It is the dark spot on the sun of their happiness, as Rummel once expressed it. You must never talk of these things in *this* house again, Mrs. Lynge.

Mrs. Holt. And, for Heaven's sake, don't mention the step-sister either.

Mrs. Lynge. Yes. by-the-bye Mrs. Bernick has a step-sister too?

Mrs. Rummel. Used to have—fortunately; for now all relationship is over between them. Yes, she was a strange one! Would you believe it, she cut her hair short, and went about with men's shoes on, in rainy weather.

Mrs. Holt. And when her step-brother—the prodigal—had run away, and all the town was, of course in commotion about him—what do you think she did? Why, she followed him.

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, but think of the scandal she caused before she left, Mrs. Holt!

Mrs. Holt. Hush, don't talk about it.

Mrs. Lynge. What, was there a scandal about her too?

Mrs. Rummel. Yes; I'll tell you all about it, Mrs. Lynge. Bernick had just become engaged to Betty Tönnesen; and as he was coming, with her on his arm, into her Aunt's room to tell her of the engagement——

Mrs. Holt. The Tönnesens were orphans, you understand.

Mrs. Rummel. — Lona Hessel rose from the chair she was sitting in, and gave the handsome, aristocratic Karsten Bernick a box on the ear, that made his head ring again!

Mrs. Lynge. Well, I never——!

Mrs. Holt. Yes, everyone knows about it.

Mrs. Rummel. And then she packed her box and went off to America.

Mrs. Lynge. She must have been making eyes at him herself.

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, that was just it. She imagined that he was going to propose to her as soon as he came home from Paris.

Mrs. Holt. Only think, how could she dream of such a thing!—Bernick, a polished young man of the world—a perfect gentleman—the darling of all the ladies——

Mrs. Rummel. ——And so proper, besides, Mrs. Holt—so moral.

Mrs. Lynge. Then, what has become of this Miss Hessel in America?

Mrs. Rummel. Well, you see, over that there rests, as Rummel once expressed it, a veil which should scarcely be lifted.

Mrs. Lynge. What does that mean?

Mrs. Rummel. She has no connection with the family now, of course; but this much is known in town, that she has sung for money in taverns over there——

Mrs. Holt. And that she has given lectures——

Mrs. Rummel. And that she has written an insane book.

Mrs. Lynge. Is it possible——?

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, Lona Hessel, too, is certainly a sun-spot in the Bernicks' happiness. But now you know the whole story, Mrs. Lynge. Heaven knows, I have only told it that you may take care what you say.

Mrs. Lynge. You may be quite easy on that point. But poor Dina Dorf! I am really very sorry for her!

Mrs. Rummel. Oh, for her it was an absolute stroke of luck. Only think, if she had remained in her parents' hands! Of course we looked after her, all of us, and brought her up as well as we could. At last Miss Bernick got leave for her to come and live here.

Mrs. Holt. But she has always been a difficult girl to deal with, after all the bad examples she has had, you know. Of course she is not like one of our own—we have to make the best of her, Mrs. Lynge.

Mrs. Rummel. Hush, there she comes [*loud*]! Yes, as you say, Dina's really a clever girl. What, are you there, Dina? We are just finishing our work here.

Mrs. Holt. Ah, how nice your coffee smells, my dear Dina——Such a cup of coffee in the forenoon——

Mrs. Bernick [*standing on the steps*]. The coffee is ready, ladies

[MARTHA *and* DINA *have meanwhile helped the servant to bring in the coffee things. All the ladies go out and sit down; each talks more kindly than the other to* DINA. *After a time she comes into the room and looks for her sewing.*]

Mrs. Bernick [*out at the coffee-table*]. Dina, won't you come too?

Dina. No, thanks; I'd rather not.

[*She sits down to sew.* Mrs. BERNICK *and* RÖRLUND *exchange a few words: a moment after, he comes into the room.*]

Rörlund [*goes up to the table, as if looking for something, and says in a low voice*] Dina.

Dina. Yes.

Rörlund. Why will you not come out?

Dina. When I came in with the coffee I could see by the strange lady's looks that they had been talking about me.

Rörlund. And did you not see, too, how friendly she was with you?

Dina. But that's what I can't bear.

Rörlund. You have a headstrong disposition, Dina.

Dina. Yes.

Rörlund. But why is it so?

Dina. I was born so.

Rörlund. But could you not try to change it?

Dina. No.

Rörlund. Why not?

Dina [*looks up at him*]. Because I belong to the "Lapsed and Lost."

Rörlund. Fie, Dina.

Dina. And so did my mother before me.

Rörlund. Who has spoken to you of such things?

Dina. No one; they never speak. Why do they not? They all handle me as carefully as though I would fall to pieces, if—— Oh, how I hate all this good-heartedness!

Rörlund. My dear Dina, I understand very well how you feel oppressed here, but——

Dina. Oh, if I could only get far away! I could get on

well enough by myself, if only the people I lived amongst weren't so—so——

Rörlund. So what?

Dina. So proper and moral.

Rörlund. Now, Dina, you don't mean that.

Dina. Oh, you know very well *how* I mean it. Every day Hilda and Netta come here that I may take example by them. I can never be as well-behaved as they are, and I *won't* be. Oh! if I were only far away, I too could be good.

Rörlund. You *are* good, my dear Dina.

Dina. What does it matter here?

Rörlund. Then you are seriously thinking of going away?

Dina. I wouldn't remain here a day longer if you were not here.

Rörlund. Tell me, Dina, why do you like so much to be with me?

Dina. Because you teach me so much that is beautiful.

Rörlund. Beautiful? Do you call what I can teach you beautiful?

Dina. Yes; or rather—you teach me nothing, but when I hear you speak, it makes me think of so much that is beautiful.

Rörlund. What do you understand, then, by a beautiful thing?

Dina. I have never thought of that.

Rörlund. Then think of it now. What do you understand by a beautiful thing?

Dina. A beautiful thing is something great—and far away.

Rörlund. Hm. My dear Dina, I sympathise with you from my inmost heart.

Dina. Is that all?

Rörlund. You know very well how unspeakably dear you are to me.

Dina. If I were Hilda or Netta, you would not be afraid to let any one see it?

Rörlund. Oh, Dina, you can form no conception of the thousand considerations—— When a man is placed as a moral pillar of the society he lives in, why—he cannot be too careful. If I were only sure that people would interpret my motives rightly! But that doesn't matter; you must and shall be helped to rise. Dina, shall we make an agreement that when I come—when circumstances permit me to come—and say, Here is my hand—that you will take it and be my wife? Do you promise me that, Dina?

Dina. Yes.

Rörlund. Thanks! thanks! For I too—— Oh, Dina, you are so dear to me. Hush! someone is coming. Dina, for my sake—go out to the others.

[*She goes out to the coffee-table. At the same moment* RUMMEL, SANDSTAD, *and* VIGELAND *come out from the Consul's office, followed by* CONSUL BERNICK, *who has a bundle of papers in his hand.*]

Bernick. Then that matter is settled.

Vigeland. Yes, in Heaven's name, so let it be.

Rummel. It is settled, Bernick. A Norseman's word stands firm as the Dovrefjeld, you know.

Bernick. And no one is to give in or fall away, whatever opposition we may meet with.

Rummel. We stand and fall together, Bernick.

Hilmar [*coming up from the garden*]. Excuse me; is it not the railway that falls?

Bernick. On the contrary, it is to go on.

Rummel. Full steam, Mr. Tönnesen.

Hilmar [*coming forward*]. Indeed!

Rörlund. What?

Mrs. Bernick [*at the door*]. My dear Karsten, what is the meaning——?

Bernick. Oh, my dear Betty, how can it interest you? [*To the three men.*] But now we must get the lists ready; the sooner the better. Of course we four put our names down first. The position we occupy in society makes it our duty to do as much as we can.

Sandstad. No doubt, Consul.

Rummel. We *will* make it go, Bernick; we're bound to.

Bernick. Oh, yes; I have no fear as to the result. We must work hard, each in his own circle, and if we can once point to a really lively interest in the affair among all ranks of society, it follows that the Town must also contribute its share.

Mrs. Bernick. Now, Karsten, you must really come and tell us——

Bernick. Oh, my dear Betty, ladies don't understand these things.

Hilmar. Then you're actually going to back up the railway, after all?

Bernick. Yes, of course.

Rörlund. But last year, Consul?

Bernick. Last year it was a different matter altogether. Then it was a coast line that was proposed.

Vigeland. ——Which would have been entirely superfluous, Rector; for have we not steamboats?

Sandstad. ——And would have been outrageously expensive.

Rummel. ——Yes, and would actually have ruined vested interests here in the town.

Bernick. The great objection was that it would have done

no good to the great mass of the community. Therefore I opposed it, and then the inland line was adopted.

Hilmar. Yes, but that won't touch the towns about here.

Bernick. It will touch *our* town, my dear Hilmar, for we are going to build a branch line.

Hilmar. Aha; it is an entirely new plan, then?

Rummel. Yes; isn't it a magnificent idea, eh?

Rörlund. Hm——

Vigeland. It cannot be denied that Providence seems to have ordered the lie of the land specially for a branch line.

Rörlund. Do you really say so, Mr. Vigeland?

Bernick. Yes, I must admit I too regard it as a special guidance that I happened to take a business journey this spring, and by chance came down a valley where I had never been before. It struck me like a flash of lightning that here was the very track for a branch to the town. I sent an engineer to inspect it all; I have here the preliminary accounts and estimates; nothing stands in our way.

Mrs. Bernick [*still standing along with the other ladies at the garden door*]. But, my dear Karsten, why have you kept all this so secret?

Bernick. Oh, my good Betty, you wouldn't have been able to grasp the true position of affairs. Besides, I haven't spoken of it to any living creature until to-day. But now the decisive moment has come. Now we must go to work openly, and with all our might. Ay, if I have to risk all I possess in the affair, I will make it succeed.

Rummel. We too, Bernick; you may rely on us.

Rörlund. Do you really expect such great results from this undertaking, gentlemen?

Bernick Yes, I should think so! What a lever it will

be for our whole community! Only think of the great tracts of forest it will bring within reach; think of all the rich mineral seams it will allow us to work; think of the river, with its one waterfall above the other! What great manufactures may there not be started?

Rörlund. And you are not afraid that a more frequent intercourse with a depraved outer world——?

Bernick. No—be quite at ease, Rector. Our busy little town rests nowadays, Heaven be thanked, on a sound moral foundation; we have all helped to drain it, if I may say so; and that we will continue to do, each in his own way. You, Rector, continue your beneficent activity in the school and in the family. We, the men of practical work, support society by spreading prosperity in as wide a circle as possible; and our women—yes, come nearer, ladies; I am glad that you should hear;—our women, I say, our wives and daughters—do you work on undisturbed in your labour of well-doing, ladies, and be a help and comfort to those nearest and dearest to you, as my dear Betty and Martha are to me and Olaf——[*looks round*]——Why, where is Olaf to-day?

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, now in the holidays, it's impossible to keep him at home.

Bernick. Then he's certain to have gone down to the water again. You'll see, this will end in a misfortune.

Hilmar. Bah—a little sport with the powers of nature.

Mrs. Rummel. How nice it is of you to be so domestic, Mr. Bernick.

Bernick. Ah, the Family is the kernel of society. A good home, honourable and trusty friends, a little close-drawn circle, where no disturbing elements cast their shadow——

[KRAP *comes in from the right with letters and papers.*]

Krap. The foreign post, Consul—and a telegram from New York.

Bernick [*taking it*]. Ah, from the owners of the *Indian Girl*.

Rummel. Oh, the post has come? Then you must excuse me——

Vigeland. And me too.

Sandstad. Good-day, Consul.

Bernick. Good-day, good-day, gentlemen. And remember we have a meeting this afternoon at five o'clock.

The Three. Yes—of course—of course. [*They go out to the right*].

Bernick [*who has read the telegram*]. Well, this is really too American! Positively shocking!

Mrs. Bernick. Why, Karsten, what is it?

Bernick. Look here, Krap—read this!

Krap [*reads*]. "Fewest possible repairs; send *Indian Girl* without delay; good season: at worst, cargo will keep her afloat." Well, I must say——

Bernick. The cargo keep her afloat! These gentlemen know very well that with that cargo she'll go to the bottom like a stone, if anything happens.

Rörlund. This shows the state of things in these vaunted large communities.

Bernick. You are right there—no consideration even for human life in a question of profit. [*To Krap.*] Can the *Indian Girl* be ready for sea in four or five days.

Krap. Yes, if Mr. Vigeland will agree to let the *Palm Tree* stand over in the meantime.

Bernick. Hm—he won't do that. Oh, just look through the mail, please. By the way, did you not see Olaf down on the pier?

Krap. No, Consul. [*He goes into Consul's office.*]

Bernick [*looking again at the telegram*]. These fellows

never think twice about risking the lives of eighteen men——

Hilmar. Well, it's a sailor's calling to brave the elements; there must be something bracing to the nerves in being, as it were, with only a thin plank between one and eternity——

Bernick. I'd like to see the shipowner amongst us that would have the conscience for such a thing! not a single one! [*Catches sight of* OLAF.] Ah, thank Heaven, there he is, safe and sound.

[OLAF, *with a fishing-line in his hand, comes running up the street and through the garden gate.*]

Olaf [*still in the garden*]. Uncle Hilmar, I've been down seeing the steamboat.

Bernick. Have you been down on the pier again?

Olaf. No, I was only out in a boat. But just think, Uncle Hilmar, a circus company came with the steamer, with horses and wild beasts; and there were a great many passengers besides.

Mrs. Rummel. Oh! are we really to have a circus?

Rörlund. We? Really I should hope not.

Mrs. Rummel. No, of course not *we*, but——

Dina. I should like to see the horsemanship.

Olaf. And I, too.

Hilmar. You're a little blockhead. What is there to see? All sham. Now it would be something worth while to see the Gaucho sweeping over the Pampas on his snorting mustang. But, hang it! here in these little towns——

Olaf [*pulling Martha's dress*]. Aunt Martha, look, look—there they come.

Mrs. Holt. Yes, indeed, here we have them.

Mrs. Lynge. Oh, what horrid people!

[*Many travellers, and a whole crowd of townspeople, come up the street.*]

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, they are a regular set of mountebanks. Just look at that one in the grey dress, Mrs. Holt; the one with the knapsack on her back.

Mrs. Holt. Yes, see, she has slung it on the handle of her parasol. Of course it is the manager's wife.

Mrs. Rummel. Oh, and there is the manager himself, the one with the beard. Well, he looks a regular pirate. Don't look at him, Hilda!

Mrs. Holt. Nor you either, Netta.

Olaf. Oh, mother, the manager is bowing to us.

Bernick. What?

Mrs. Bernick. What do you say, child?

Mrs. Rummel. Yes, I declare, and there's the woman nodding too!

Bernick. Come, this is really too much!

Martha [*with an involuntary cry*]. Ah——!

Mrs. Bernick. What is it, Martha?

Martha. Oh no, nothing—only I thought——

Olaf [*shrieks with delight*]. Look, there come the others, with the horses and wild beasts! And there are the Americans too! All the sailors from the *Indian Girl*——

[*"Yankee Doodle" is heard, played on a clarinet and drum.*]

Hilmar [*stopping his ears*]. Ugh, ugh, ugh!

Rörlund. I think we should retire for a little, ladies. This is not a scene for us. Let us go to our work again.

Mrs. Bernick. Perhaps we should draw the curtains?

Rorlund. Yes, that is just what I was thinking.

[*The ladies take their places at the table: Rörlund shuts the garden door and draws the curtain over it and over the windows: it becomes half dark in the room.*]

Olaf [*peeping out*]. Mother, the manager's wife is standing at the pump washing her face!

Mrs. Bernick. What, in the middle of the market-place!

Mrs. Rummel. And in broad daylight!

Hilmar. Well, if I were travelling in the desert and came upon a spring, I should never hesitate to—— Ugh, that abominable clarinet!

Rörlund. It seems to me the police should interfere.

Bernick. Oh, no; one mustn't be too hard upon foreigners; these people haven't the deep-rooted sense of propriety that keeps us within the right limits. Let them do as they please, it doesn't hurt us. All this disorderliness, setting itself up against propriety and good manners, is, fortunately, quite out of touch with our society, if I may say so——What is this?

[*A strange lady suddenly enters by the door on the right.*]

The Ladies [*frightened and speaking low*]. The circus woman! The manager's wife!

Mrs. Bernick. Good Heavens! what does this mean?

Martha [*starts up*]. Ah!

The Lady. Good-day, my dear Betty! Good-day, Martha! Good-day, brother-in-law!

Mrs. Bernick [*with a shriek*]. Lona——!

Bernick (*starts back a step*). As I live——!

Mrs. Holt. Why, mercy on us——!

Mrs. Rummel. It can't be possible——!

Hilmar. What! Ugh!

Mrs. Bernick. Lona! Is it really——?

Lona. ——Really me? Yes, indeed it is. You may fall on my neck and embrace me, for that matter.

Hilmar. Ugh! ugh!

Mrs Bernick. And you come here as——?

Bernick. You are actually going to appear——?

Lona. Appear? How appear?

Bernick. I mean—in the circus?

Lona. Ha! ha! ha! What nonsense, brother-in-law. Do you think I belong to the circus? No; it's true I've done all sorts of things, and made a fool of myself in many ways——

Mrs. Rummel. Hm——!

Lona. But I've never learned to play tricks on horseback——

Bernick. Then you're not——?

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, thank goodness!

Lona. No, indeed; we came like other respectable people—second-class, it's true, but we're used to that.

Mrs. Bernick. We, you say?

Bernick [*striding forward*]. What *we*?

Lona. Why, my boy and I, of course.

The Ladies [*with a cry*]. Your boy!

Hilmar. What?

Rörlund. Well, I must say——

Mrs. Bernick. Why, what do you mean, Lona?

Lona. Of course I mean John; I've no other boy but John, that I know of—or Johan, as you call him.

Mrs. Bernick. Johan——!

Mrs. Rummel [*aside to Mrs. Lynge*]. The prodigal brother!

Bernick [*slowly*]. Is Johan with you?

Lona. Of course, of course; I wouldn't travel without him. But you're all looking so dismal—and sitting here in this twilight, sewing at something white? There hasn't been a death in the family?

Rörlund. You find yourself, Miss Hessel, in the society for the Lapsed and Lost.

Lona [*half to herself*]. What do you say? These nice-looking, well-behaved ladies, can *they* be——?

Mrs. Rummel. Oh, this is too much!

Lona. Oh, I understand, I understand! Why, good gracious, that's Mrs. Rummel! And there sits Mrs. Holt, too! Well, we three haven't grown younger since we met last. But listen now, good people; let the Lapsed and Lost wait for one day; they'll be none the worse for it. A joyful occasion like this——

Rörlund. A return home is not always a joyful occasion!

Lona. Indeed? How do you read your Bible, Pastor?

Rörlund. I am not a clergyman.

Lona. Oh, then you will be for certain—— But, fie, fie—this moral linen here smells so tainted—just like a shroud. I am accustomed to the air of the prairies now, I can tell you.

Bernick [*wiping his forehead*]. Yes, it is really rather oppressive in here.

Lona. Wait a little, wait a little—we'll soon rise from the sepulchre [*draws back the curtains*]. We must have broad daylight here when my boy comes. Yes—then you'll see a boy that has washed himself——

Hilmar. Ugh!

Lona [*opens the doors and the windows*]. I mean when he *has* washed himself—up at the hotel—for on board the steamer you get as dirty as a pig.

Hilmar. Ugh, ugh!

Lona. Ugh? Why I declare it is—— [*Points to Hilmar, and asks the others.*] Does he still loaf about saying "ugh" to everything.

Hilmar. I don't loaf: I stop here for the sake of my health.

Rörlund. Hm, ladies, I don't think that——

Lona [*catches sight of Olaf*]. Is he yours, Betty? Give me your fist, my boy—or are you afraid of your ugly old aunt?

Rörlund [*putting his book under his arm*]. I don't think, ladies, that we are quite in the mood for doing more work to-day. But we shall meet again to-morrow?

Lona [*as the visitors rise to go*]. Yes, let us—I'll be here, you may depend.

Rörlund. You? Allow me, Miss Hessel, to ask what *you* will do in our society?

Lona. I will let in fresh air, Pastor.

ACT II.

[*The garden room in Consul Bernick's house.*]

[*Mrs. Bernick is sitting alone at the work-table, sewing. In a little while Consul Bernick enters from the right, with his hat and gloves on, and a stick in his hand.*]

Mrs. Bernick. Are you home already, Karsten?

Bernick. Yes. I have an appointment here.

Mrs. Bernick [*sighing*]. Oh, yes, I suppose Johan will be down here again.

Bernick. No, it's with one of my men [*takes off his hat*]. Where are all the ladies to-day?

Mrs. Bernick. Mrs. Rummel and Hilda hadn't time to come.

Bernick. Ah! Sent excuses?

Mrs. Bernick. Yes; they had so much to do at home.

Bernick. Of course, of course. And the others aren't coming either, I suppose.

Mrs. Bernick. No, something has come in the way with them too.

Bernick. I was sure it would. Where is Olaf?

Mrs. Bernick. I allowed him to go out a little with Dina

Bernick. Hm; Dina, the thoughtless hussy. How could she go and at once strike up a friendship with Johan——!

Mrs. Bernick. Why, my dear Karsten, Dina has no idea——

Bernick. Well then, Johan at least should have had tact enough not to take any notice of her. I could see Vigeland's expressive glances.

Mrs. Bernick [*dropping her work into her lap*]. Karsten, can you understand what has brought them home?

Bernick. Hm; he has a farm over there, which I suppose isn't getting on very well; she hinted yesterday that they had to travel second-class——

Mrs. Bernick. Yes, I'm afraid it must be something of that sort. But that she should have come with him! She! after the terrible way she insulted you——!

Bernick. Oh, don't think of these old stories.

Mrs. Bernick. How can I help thinking of that time? He's my own brother, you know; and yet it's not for his sake, but all the unpleasantness it will bring upon you. Karsten, I am so dreadfully afraid that——

Bernick. What are you afraid of?

Mrs. Bernick. Might they not think of arresting him for that money your mother lost?

Bernick. What nonsense! Who can prove that she lost the money?

Mrs. Bernick. Unfortunately the whole town knows it, and you said yourself——

Bernick. I said nothing. The town knows nothing about these affairs; it was a mere rumour.

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, how noble you are, Karsten,

Bernick. Forget these old stories, I say. You don't know how you torture me by raking all this up again. [*He walks up and down the room; then he pitches his stick away from him.*]

That they should come home just at this time, when I depend so much on unmixed good-feeling, both in the press and in the town. There will be paragraphs in the papers all over the country-side. They'll rip up all these old stories—just as you do. In a community like ours—— [*Throws down his gloves upon the table.*] And I haven't a person here I can confide in, or that can give me any support.

Mrs. Bernick. No one at all, Karsten?

Bernick. No; you know I haven't. That they should come upon me just at this moment! There's no doubt they'll cause a scandal in one way or another—especially she. It is a perfect calamity to have such people in one's family.

Mrs. Bernick. Well, it's not my fault that——

Bernick. What's not your fault? That you are related to them? No; that's true enough.

Mrs. Bernick. And it wasn't I that asked them to come home.

Bernick. Aha! now we have it. "*I* didn't ask them to come home; *I* didn't write for them; *I* didn't drag them home by the hair of their heads." Oh, I know the whole story off by heart.

Mrs. Bernick [*bursting into tears*]. Oh, why are you so unkind?

Bernick. Yes, that's right; set to crying, so that the town may have that to talk about, too. Stop this nonsense, Betty. You'd better sit outside there; someone might come in. Perhaps you want people to see madam with red eyes? Yes, it would be nice if it got abroad among people that—— Ah! I hear someone in the lobby. [*A knock.*] Come in.

[MRS. BERNICK *goes out to the garden steps with her work.* AUNE *comes in from the right.*]

Aune Good-day, Consul!

Bernick. Good-day. Well, I suppose you can guess what I want with you?

Aune. Your clerk told me yesterday that you were not pleased with——

Bernick. I am altogether displeased with the way things go on at the yard, Aune. You are not getting on at all with the repairs. The *Palm Tree* should have been at sea long ago. Mr. Vigeland comes bothering me about it every day. He is a troublesome man to have for a partner.

Aune. The *Palm Tree* can go to sea the day after to-morrow.

Bernick. At last! But the American, the *Indian Girl*, that's been lying here five weeks, and——

Aune. The American? I understood that we were first to get on as fast as possible with your own ship.

Bernick. I have given you no reason for such an idea. You should have made all possible progress with the American too; but you have done nothing.

Aune. The vessel's bottom is as rotten as matchwood, Consul; the more we patch at it the worse it gets.

Bernick. That's not the true reason. Krap has told me the whole truth. You don't understand how to work with the new machines—or rather, you won't work with them.

Aune. Consul Bernick, I am getting on for sixty; from my boyhood I have been accustomed to the old way of work——

Bernick. We can't get on with it nowadays. You mustn't think, Aune, that it's for the sake of mere profit; luckily I don't require that; but I must take into consideration the community I live in, and the house of business of which I am the head. It is from me that that progress must come, or it will never come at all.

Aune. I have no objection to progress, Consul.

Bernick. No, for your own narrow circle, for the working-class. Oh, I know well enough the agitations you get up: you make speeches; you stir people up; but when a tangible piece of progress offers itself, as in the case of the machines, you will have nothing to do with it; you are afraid.

Aune. Yes, I am really afraid, Consul; I am afraid for the many whom the machines will rob of their daily bread. You often talk of care for the community, Consul, but it seems to me that the community, too, has its duties. How dare science and capital set all this new mechanism to work before the community has educated a generation that can use it?

Bernick. You read and think too much, Aune; it does you no good; it is that which makes you dissatisfied with your position.

Aune. It is not that, Consul; but I cannot bear to see one good workman after another sent away to starvation for the sake of these machines.

Bernick. Hm; when printing was discovered, many copyists had to starve.

Aune. Would you have admired the art so much, Consul, if you had then been a copyist?

Bernick. I didn't send for you to argue with you. I sent for you to tell you that the *Indian Girl* must be ready to sail the day after to-morrow.

Aune. Why, Consul——

Bernick. The day after to-morrow, do you hear; at the same time as our own ship; not an hour later. I have my reasons for hurrying on the affair. Have you read this morning's paper? Ah!—then you know that the Americans have been making disturbances again. The shameless

pack put the whole town topsy-turvy. Not a night passes without fights in the taverns or on the street; not to speak of other abominations.

Aune. Yes, they're certainly a bad lot.

Bernick. And who gets the blame for all this disturbance? It is I—yes I, that suffer for it. These newspaper scribblers are always covertly carping at us for giving our whole attention to the *Palm Tree.* And I, whose mission it is to be an example to my fellow-citizens, must have such things thrown in my teeth! I cannot bear it. It won't do for me to have my name bespattered in this way.

Aune. Oh, your name is so good it can bear more than that.

Bernick. Not just now; precisely at this moment I need all the respect and good-will of my fellow-citizens. I have a great undertaking on hand, as you have probably heard; but if evil-disposed persons succeed in shaking people's unqualified confidence in me, it may involve me in the greatest difficulties. So I must silence these carping and spiteful scribblers at any price, and that is why I give you till the day after to-morrow.

Aune. You might as well give me till this afternoon, Consul Bernick.

Bernick. You mean that I am asking impossibilities?

Aune. Yes, with the working staff we have now——

Bernick. Oh, very well;—then we must look about us elsewhere.

Aune. Will you really dismiss still more of the old workmen?

Bernick. No, that's not what I'm thinking of.

Aune. For I am sure if you did so there would be an outcry both in the town and in the newspapers.

Bernick. Very possibly; therefore I won't do it. But if

the *Indian Girl* isn't cleared the day after to-morrow I shall dismiss you.

Aune [*with a start*]. Me! [*laughing.*] Oh, you are joking now, Consul.

Bernick. I don't advise you to trust to that.

Aune. You can think of dismissing me! Me, whose father and grandfather worked in the shipyard all their lives, and myself too——

Bernick. Who forces me to it?

Aune. You ask impossibilities, Consul.

Bernick. Oh, where there's a will there's a way. Yes or no; answer me decidedly, or I dismiss you on the spot.

Aune [*coming nearer*]. Consul Bernick, have you rightly reflected what it is to dismiss an old workman? You say he can look out for something else? Oh, yes, I daresay he can—but is that all? If you could only look into the house of a dismissed workman on the evening when he comes home and brings his tool-chest with him.

Bernick. Do you think I am glad to part with you? Have I not always been a good master to you?

Aune. So much the worse, Consul. Just on that account my people at home will not blame you. They will not say anything to me, for they dare not; but they will look at me when I am not noticing, and think it must surely have been my fault. You see, that—that is what I cannot bear. Poor man as I am, I have always been the first in my own house. My humble home is itself a little community, Consul Bernick. That little community I have been able to support and hold together because my wife believed in me, my children believed in me. And now the whole thing falls to pieces.

Bernick. Well, if it can't be otherwise, the less must fall

before the greater; the part must in Heaven's name be sacrificed to the whole. I can give you no other answer; and you will find things are so ordered here in the world. But you are an obstinate man, Aune! You stand against me, not because you can't do otherwise, but because you *will* not prove the superiority of machinery to manual labour.

Aune. And you hold fast to this, Consul, because you know that if you send me away you will at least have shown the papers your goodwill.

Bernick. And if it were so? You hear what a dilemma I am in—I must either have the whole press down upon me, or I must get it well-disposed towards me at the moment when I am working for a great and beneficent cause. What follows? Can I possibly act otherwise? I tell you the question is whether your home is to be kept up and hundreds of new homes to be kept down, hundreds of homes which will never be founded, will never have a smoking hearthstone, if I do not succeed in what I am now working for. So I give you your choice.

Aune. Well, if that is how it stands, I have nothing more to say.

Bernick. Hm—my dear Aune, I am truly sorry that we must part.

Aune. We will *not* part, Consul Bernick.

Bernick. What?

Aune. Even a common man has his rights here in the world.

Bernick. Of course, of course. Then you can promise——?

Aune. The *Indian Girl* shall be cleared the day after to-morrow.

[*He bows and goes out to the right.*]

Bernick. Aha, I've got over his stiff-necked notions. I take that as a good omen.——

HILMAR TÖNNESEN, *with a cigar in his mouth, comes through the garden gate.*]

Hilmar [*on the garden steps*]. Good-day, Betty! Good-day, Bernick!

Mrs. Bernick. Good-day.

Hilmar. Oh, you've been crying, I see. Then you have heard all?

Mrs. Bernick. All what?

Hilmar. That the scandal is in full swing! Ugh!

Bernick. What do you mean?

Hilmar [*coming into the room*]. Why, that the two Americans are going about the streets, showing themselves off in company with Dina Dorf.

Mrs. Bernick [*also coming in*]. Oh, Hilmar, can it be possible——?

Hilmar. Yes, unfortunately, it's quite true. Lona had even the want of tact to call out to *me*; but of course I pretended not to hear her.

Bernick. And of course all this hasn't been going on unnoticed.

Hilmar. No, you may be sure it hasn't. People stopped and looked at them. It ran like wildfire over the town —like a fire on the western prairies. People stood at the windows of all the houses waiting for the procession to pass, head to head behind the curtains. Ugh! You must excuse me, Betty; I say, ugh! for it makes me so nervous. If this goes on I shall have to think of taking a trip somewhere, pretty far off.

Mrs. Bernick. But you should have spoken to him, and showed him——

Hilmar. In the public street? No, I beg to be excused.

The idea that that fellow should dare to show himself here in town! Well, we'll see if the press doesn't put a stopper on him. I beg your pardon, Betty, but——

Bernick. The press, you say? Have you heard any hints of that sort?

Hilmar. Yes, a slight hint. When I left here last night I strolled up to the club for the sake of my health. I could see from the sudden silence when I came in that the two Americans had been on the *tapis*. And then in came that impertinent Editor Hammer, and congratulated me, before everybody, upon my rich cousin's return.

Bernick. Rich——?

Hilmar. Yes, that was what he said. I measured him from top to toe with a look, and gave him to understand that I knew nothing of Johan Tönnesen being rich. "Indeed," says he; "that's strange. In America people generally get on when they've something to start with, and you're cousin didn't go over empty-handed."

Bernick. Hm! be so good as to——

Mrs. Bernick [*anxiously*]. There, you see, Karsten.

Hilmar. Well, at any rate, I've had a sleepless night on the fellow's account, and there he is going about the streets, looking as if he had nothing to be ashamed of. Why wasn't he finished at once? It's intolerable how tough some people are.

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, Hilmar, what are you saying?

Hilmar. Oh, I'm not saying anything. But here he escapes safe and sound from railway accidents, and fights with Californian bears and Blackfoot Indians; why, he's not even scalped—— Ugh! here they are.

Bernick [*looks down the street*]. Olaf is with them, too.

Hilmar. Yes, of course; they must remind people that they belong to the first family in the town. Look, look,

there come all the loafers out from the druggist's shop to stare at them and make remarks. Really, this is too much for my nerves; how a man, under such circumstances, is to hold high the banner of the ideal——

Bernick. They are coming straight here. Listen, Betty; It is my decided wish that you should be as friendly as possible to them.

Mrs. Bernick. Will you allow me, Karsten?

Bernick. Of course, of course; and you, too, Hilmar. They surely won't remain here very long; and when we are alone with them—no innuendoes—we must not hurt their feelings in any way.

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, Karsten, how noble you are.

Bernick. Now, now, don't talk of that.

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, but you must let me thank you, and forgive me for being so hasty. You had every reason to——

Bernick. Don't talk of it, don't talk of it, I say.

Hilmar. Ugh!

[JOHAN TÖNNESEN *and* DINA, *and after them* LONA *and* OLAF, *come through the garden.*]

Lona. Good-day, good-day, my dear people.

Johan. We have been out looking all about the old place, Karsten.

Bernick. Yes, so I hear. Greatly changed, isn't it?

Lona. Consul Bernick's great and good works everywhere. We have been up in the gardens you have presented to the town——

Bernick. Oh, there!

Lona. "Karsten Bernick's Gift," as the inscription over the entrance says. Yes, it's all your work here.

Johan. And such magnificent ships as you have got! I met my old school-fellow, the captain of the *Palm Tree.*

Lona. Yes, and you've built a new school-house, too. And they owe both the gas and the water-works to you, I hear.

Bernick. Oh, one must work for the community one lives in.

Lona. Well, it's good of you, brother-in-law ; but it is nice, too, to see how people appreciate you. I don't think I am vain, but I could not help reminding one or two of the people we talked to that we belong to the family.

Hilmar. Ugh——!

Lona. Do you say "Ugh!" to that?

Hilmar. No, I said "Hm"——

Lona. Oh, was that all, poor fellow. But you are quite alone here to-day!

Mrs. Bernick. Yes, to-day we are quite alone.

Lona. By-the-bye, we met one or two of the Lapsed and Lost up in the market-place ; they seemed to be very busy. But we've never had a proper talk yet ; yesterday we had the three pioneers of progress here, and the Pastor too——

Hilmar. The Rector.

Lona. I call him the Pastor. But now—what do you think of my work for these fifteen years? Hasn't he grown a fine boy? Who would recognise the madcap that ran away from home.

Hilmar. Hm——!

Johan. Oh, Lona, don't boast too much.

Lona. I don't care, I'm really proud of it. Well, well, it's the only thing I've done in the world, but it gives me a sort of right to exist. Yes, Johan, when I think how we two began life over there with only four paws——

Hilmar. Hands.

Lona. I say paws, for they were as dirty as——

Hilmar. Ugh!

Lona. And empty, too.

Hilmar. Empty. Well I must say——

Lona. What must you say?

Bernick. Hm!

Hilmar. I must say—ugh!

[*Goes out upon the garden stair.*]

Lona. What's wrong with the man?

Bernick. Oh, never mind him; he's rather nervous just now. But wouldn't you like to look round the garden a little? You haven't been down there yet, and I happen to have an hour to spare.

Lona. Yes, I should like it very much; you may believe my thoughts have often been with you all here in the garden.

Mrs. Bernick. There have been great changes there, too, as you will see.

[*The* CONSUL, *his* WIFE, *and* LONA *go down the garden, where they are now and then visible during the following scene.*]

Olaf [*at the garden door*]. Uncle Hilmar, do you know what Uncle John asked me? He asked if I'd like to go with him to America.

Hilmar. You, you little good-for-nothing, that go about tied to your mother's apron-strings.

Olaf. Yes, but I won't be so any more. You shall see, when I'm big——

Hilmar. Oh, rubbish; you don't really want to be made a man of——

[*They go down the garden together.*]

Johan [*to* DINA, *who has taken off her hat, and stands at the door to the right, shaking the dust from her dress*]. The walk has made you very warm.

Dina. Yes; it was splendid. I have never had such a nice walk before.

Johan. Perhaps you don't often go walks in the morning.

Dina. Oh, yes; but only with Olaf.

Johan. Ah!—Perhaps you would like to go down the garden?

Dina. No; I would rather remain here.

Johan. And I too. Then it's settled that we take a walk every morning?

Dina. No, Mr. Tönnesen, you must not do that.

Johan. Why should I not? You know you promised.

Dina. Yes, but on thinking over it, I—— You must not go out with me.

Johan. Why not?

Dina. Ah, you're a stranger here; you can't understand it; but I must tell you——

Johan. Well?

Dina. No, I would rather not speak about it.

Johan. Oh, yes—you may speak to me of whatever you like.

Dina. Then I must tell you that I am not like the other girls here; there is something—something about me. That's why you musn't walk with me.

Johan. But I can't understand this at all. You haven't done anything wrong?

Dina. No, not I, but——; no, I won't say any more about it. You're sure to hear it from the others.

Johan. Hm——.

Dina. But there was something else I wanted to ask you about.

Johan. And what was that?

Dina. Is it really so easy to lead a life that is worth something over in America?

Johan. Well, it isn't always *easy*; one has often to suffer much and work hard in the beginning.

Dina. I would willingly do that——

Johan. You?

Dina. I can work well enough; I am strong and healthy, and Aunt Martha has taught me a great deal.

Johan. Then, hang it all, why not come with us?

Dina. Oh, now you're only joking; you said the same to Olaf too. But I wanted to know, too, if people over there are very—very moral, you know?

Johan. Moral?

Dina. Yes, I mean, are they so—so proper and well-behaved as they are here?

Johan. Well, at any rate, they're not so bad as people here think. Don't be at all afraid of that.

Dina. You don't understand me. What I want is just that they should not be so very proper and moral.

Johan. Indeed? What would you have them then?

Dina. I would have them natural.

Johan. Well, that's perhaps just what they are.

Dina. Then it would be a good thing for me to get over there.

Johan. Yes, indeed, it would; so you must come with us.

Dina. No, I would not go with you; I would have to go alone. Oh, I should get on; I should soon be fit for something——

Bernick [*at the foot of the garden stair with the two ladies*]. Stay here, stay here; I will fetch it, my dear Betty. You might easily catch cold.

[*Comes into the room and looks for his wife's shawl.*]

Mrs. Bernick [*from the garden*]. You must come too, Johan; we are going down to the grotto.

Bernick. No, Johan must remain here just now. Here,

Dina; take my wife's shawl and go with them. Johan will remain here with me, my dear Betty. I want to ask him about things in America.

Mrs. Bernick. Very well; then come after us; you know where to find us.

[MRS. BERNICK, LONA, *and* DINA *go down through the garden to the left.*]

Bernick [*looks out after them for a moment, goes and shuts the furthest back door on the left, then goes up to Johan, seizes both his hands, shakes them, and presses them warmly*]. Johan, now we are alone; you must give me leave to thank you.

Johan. Oh, nonsense!

Bernick. My house and home, my domestic happiness, my whole position as a citizen in society—all these I owe to you.

Johan. Well, I'm glad of it, my dear Karsten; so some good came of that foolish story after all.

Bernick [*shaking his hands again*]. Thanks, thanks, all the same. Not one in ten thousand would have done what you then did for me.

Johan. Oh, nonsense! Were we not both of us young and thoughtless? One of us had to take the blame upon him.

Bernick. But to whom did it lie nearer than to the guilty one?

Johan. Stop! *Then* it lay nearer to the innocent one. I was alone, free, an orphan; it was a positive blessing to me to escape from the grind of the office. You, on the other hand, had your old mother in life, and, besides, you had just become secretly engaged to Betty, and she was very fond of you. What would have become of her if she had come to know——?

Bernick. True, true, true; but——

Johan. And was it not just for Betty's sake that you broke off that entanglement with Madame Dorf? It was for the very purpose of putting an end to it that you were up at her house that night——

Bernick. Yes, the fatal night when that drunken beast came home. Yes, Johan, it was for Betty's sake; but yet, that you should turn appearances against yourself and go away——

Johan. Have no scruples, my dear Karsten. We agreed that it should be so; you had to be saved, and you were my friend. I can tell you I was proud of that friendship. Here was I, plodding along like a poor stay-at-home, when you came back like a very prince from your great foreign tour; you had been in both London and Paris. Then you chose me for your bosom friend, though I was four years younger than you. Well, that was because you were making love to Betty; now I understand it well enough. But how proud I was of it then! And who wouldn't have been proud? Who would not willingly have sacrificed himself for you, especially when it was only a matter of a month's town-talk, and one had only to run away out into the wide world.

Bernick. Hm! My dear Johan, I must tell you openly that the story is not so entirely forgotten yet.

Johan. Is it not? Well, what does it matter to me when once I am back again at my farm?

Bernick. Then you are going back again?

Johan. Of course.

Bernick. But not so very soon, I hope?

Johan. As soon as possible. It was only to please Lona that I came over at all.

Bernick. Indeed; how so?

Johan. Well, you see, Lona isn't young now, and for some

time past a sort of home-sickness has come over her, though she would never admit it. [*Smiling.*] She dared not leave behind her an irresponsible being like me, who, before I was out of my teens, had been mixed up in——

Bernick. And then?

Johan. Well, Karsten, now I must make a confession I am really ashamed of.

Bernick. You haven't told her the whole truth, have you?

Johan. Yes, I have. It was wrong of me, but I couldn't help it. You have no conception what Lona has been to me. You could never endure her; but to me she has been a mother. In the first few years over there, when we were desperately poor, oh, how she worked; and when I had a long illness, and could not earn anything, and could not keep her from doing it, she took to singing songs in the cafés, gave lectures that people laughed at, wrote a book she has both laughed and cried over since, and all to keep my soul and body together. Last winter, when I saw her pining away, she who had toiled and moiled for me, could I sit still and look on? No, I couldn't, Karsten. I said, "Go, go, Lona, don't be afraid for me; I am not such a scapegrace as you think." And then—then I told her the whole.

Bernick. And how did she take it?

Johan. Oh, she said what was quite true, that as I was innocent I could have no objection to taking a trip over here myself. But you needn't be afraid; Lona will say nothing, and I'll take better care of my own tongue another time.

Bernick. Yes, yes, I am sure you will.

Johan. Here is my hand. And now don't let us talk any more of that old story; fortunately it is the only escapade either you or I have been mixed up in, I hope. And now I mean thoroughly to enjoy the few days I shall have here.

You can't think what a splendid walk we have had this forenoon. Who would have thought that little baggage that ran about here and played angels in the theatre——! But tell me what became of her parents afterwards?

Bernick. Oh, there's nothing more to tell than what I wrote you immediately after you went away. You got the two letters, of course?

Johan. Of course, of course; I have them both. The drunken scoundrel left her?

Bernick. And was afterwards killed in a drinking-bout.

Johan. And she too died soon after? But I suppose you did all you could for her without exciting attention.

Bernick. She was proud; she betrayed nothing, but she would accept nothing.

Johan. Well, at any rate, it was right of you to take Dina into your house.

Bernick. Oh, yes—— However, it was really Martha that brought that about.

Johan. Oh, it was Martha? By-the-bye, where is Martha to-day?

Bernick. Why, as for her, when she's not busy at the school, she has her sick people to attend to.

Johan. Then it was Martha that looked after her?

Bernick. Yes, Martha always had a sort of weakness for education. That's why she accepted a place in the communal school. It was very foolish of her.

Johan. She certainly looked very weary yesterday; I should not think her health would stand it.

Bernick. Oh, so far as her health goes, I suppose it's all right. But it is unpleasant for me. It looks as if I, her brother, were not willing to maintain her.

Johan. Maintain her? I thought she had enough of her own to——

Bernick. Not a halfpenny. I daresay you remember what difficulties my mother was in when you went away. She got on for some time with my help; but, of course, in the long run that would not do for me. So I got myself taken into partnership; but even then things did not go well. At last I had to take over the whole affair, and when we made up our accounts, it appeared that there was scarcely anything left to my mother's share; and as she died shortly afterwards, Martha, of course, was left with nothing.

Johan. Poor Martha!

Bernick. Poor! Why so? You don't suppose I let her want for anything? Oh no, I think I may say I am a good brother. Of course she lives with us and eats at our table; her salary is quite enough for her dress, and—what can a single woman want more?

Johan. Hm; that's not the way we think in America.

Bernick. No, I daresay not; there are too many agitators at work over there. But here, in our little circle, where, thank Heaven, corruption has not yet managed to creep in, here women are content to occupy a modest and becoming position. For the rest, it is Martha's own fault; she could have been provided for long ago if she had cared to.

Johan. You mean she could have married?

Bernick. Yes, and married very well too; she has had several good offers; it's strange enough—a woman without money, no longer young, and, besides, quite insignificant.

Johan. Insignificant?

Bernick. Oh, I don't blame her at all for it. Indeed I wouldn't have her otherwise. You know, in a large house like ours, it is always well to have some steady-going person like her whom one can put to anything that may turn up.

Johan. Yes, but she herself——?

Bernick. She herself? why of course she has enough to

interest herself in; Betty, and Olaf, and me, you know. People should not think of themselves first, and women least of all. We have each our community, great or small, to support and work for. I do so, at any rate. [*Pointing to Krap, who enters from the right.*] See, here you have a proof. Do you think it is my own business I am occupied with? By no means. [*Quickly to Krap.*] Well?

Krap [*whispers, showing him a bundle of papers*]. All the arrangements for the purchase are complete.

Bernick. Capital! first-rate!—Oh, brother-in-law, you must excuse me for a moment. [*Low, and with a pressure of the hand.*] Thanks, thanks, Johan, and be sure that anything I can do to serve you—you understand.—Come, Mr. Krap! [*They go into the Consul's office.*]

Johan [*looks after him for some time*]. Hm——!

[*He turns to go down the garden. At the same moment* MARTHA *enters from the right with a little basket on her arm.*]

Johan. Ah, Martha?

Martha. Oh—Johan—is it you?

Johan. Are you astir so early, too?

Martha. Yes. Wait a little; the others will be here soon. [*Turns to go out to the left.*]

Johan. I say, Martha,—why are you always in such a hurry?

Martha. I?

Johan. Yesterday you kept out of the way so that I couldn't get a word with you, and to-day——

Martha. Yes, but——

Johan. Before, we were always together, we two old playfellows.

Martha. Ah, Johan, that is many, many years ago.

Johan. Why, bless me, it's fifteen years ago, neither more nor less. Perhaps you think I have changed a great deal?

Martha. You? Oh yes, you too, although——

Johan. What do you mean?

Martha. Oh, nothing.

Johan. You don't seem overjoyed to see me again.

Martha. I have waited so long, Johan—too long.

Johan. Waited? For me to come?

Martha. Yes.

Johan. And why did you think I would come?

Martha. To expiate where you had sinned.

Johan. I?

Martha. Have you forgotten that a woman died in shame and need for your sake? Have you forgotten that by your fault a young girl's best years have been embittered?

Johan. And I must hear this from you? Martha, has your brother never——?

Martha. What of him?

Johan. Has he never——; oh, I mean has he never even said a word in my defence?

Martha. Ah, Johan, you know Karsten's strict principles.

Johan. Hm—of course, of course,—yes, I know my old friend Karsten's strict principles. But this is——! Well, well—I have just been talking to him. It seems to me he has changed a good deal.

Martha. How can you say so? Karsten has always been an excellent man.

Johan. That wasn't exactly what I meant; but let that pass. Hm; now I understand the light you have seen me in; it is the prodigal's return that you have been waiting for.

Martha. Listen, Johan, and I shall tell you in what light I have seen you. [*Points down to the garden.*] Do you see that girl playing in the grass with Olaf? That is Dina. Do you remember that confused letter you wrote me when

you went away? You told me to believe in you. I have believed in you, Johan. All the bad things that there were rumours of afterwards must have been done in desperation, without thought, without purpose——

Johan. What do you mean?

Martha. Oh, you understand me well enough; no more of that. But you had to go away—to begin afresh—a new life. See, Johan, I have stood in your place here, I, your old playfellow. The duties you forgot, or could not look to, I performed for you. I tell you this so that you may not have this to reproach yourself with. I have been a mother to that much-wronged child, have brought her up as well as I could——

Johan. And sacrificed your whole life in so doing!

Martha. It has not been thrown away. But you have been long of coming, Johan.

Johan. Martha—if I could say to you—— Well, let me at any rate thank you for your faithful friendship.

Martha [*smiling sadly*]. Hm—well, now we have made a clean breast of it, Johan. Hush, here comes someone. Good-bye; I cannot just now——

[*She goes out through the furthest back door to the left.* MISS HESSEL *comes from the garden, followed by* Mr. BERNICK.]

Mrs. Bernick [*still in the garden*]. Good heavens, what can you be thinking of?

Lona. Let me alone, I tell you; I must and will talk to him.

Mrs Bernick. But it would be the greatest scandal! Ah, Johan, are you still here?

Lona. Out with you, boy; don't hang about in-doors in the stuffy rooms; go down the garden and talk to Dina.

Johan. That's just what I was thinking of doing.

Mrs. Bernick. But——

Lona. Listen, Johan; have you ever looked rightly at Dina?

Johan. Yes, I should think I had.

Lona. Well, you should look at her to some purpose She's the very thing for you.

Mrs. Bernick. But, Lona——

Johan. The thing for me?

Lona. Yes; to look at, I mean. Now go!

Johan. Yes, yes, I don't need any driving.

[*He goes down the garden.*]

Mrs. Bernick. Lona, you amaze me. You can't possibly be in earnest.

Lona. Yes, indeed I am. Isn't she fresh, and sound, and true? She is just the wife for John. She's the sort of companion he needs over there; something different from an old step-sister.

Mrs. Bernick. Dina! Dina Dorf! Consider a little——!

Lona. I consider first and foremost the boy's happiness. Help him I must and will; he is no hand at such things; he has never had much of an eye for women.

Mrs. Bernick. He? Johan! Why, haven't we sad cause to know that——

Lona. Oh, don't talk of that foolish story! Where is Bernick? I want to speak to him.

Mrs. Bernick. Lona, you must not do it, I tell you!

Lona. I shall do it. If the boy likes her, and she him, why then they shall have each other. Bernick is such a clever man; he must manage the thing——

Mrs. Bernick. And you think that these American improprieties will be tolerated here——

Lona. Nonsense, Betty——

Mrs. Bernick. ——That a man like Karsten, with his strict moral ideas——

Lona. Oh, come now, surely they're not so unreasonably strict.

Mrs. Bernick. What do you dare to say?

Lona. I dare to say that I don't believe Bernick is very much more moral than other men.

Mrs. Bernick. Is your hatred for him still so deep-rooted? But what do you want here, since you have never been able to forget that——? I can't understand how you dare look him in the face, after the shameful way you insulted him.

Lona. Yes, Betty, I forgot myself terribly that time.

Mrs. Bernick. And how nobly he has forgiven you—he, who had done no wrong. For *he* couldn't help your foolish fancies. But since that time you have hated me too. [*Bursts into tears.*] You have always envied me my happiness; and now you come here to heap this trouble upon me; to show the town what sort of a family I have brought Karsten into. Yes, it is I that have to suffer for it all, and that is what you want. Oh, it is cruel of you!

[*She goes out crying through the furthest back door to the left.*]

Lona [*looking after her*]. Poor Betty!

[CONSUL BERNICK *comes out of his office.*]

Bernick [*still at the door*]. Yes, yes, that is well, Krap; that is excellent. Send four hundred crowns for a dinner to the poor. [*Turns.*] Lona! [*Coming nearer.*] You are alone? Isn't Betty here?

Lona. No. Shall I fetch her?

Bernick. No, no; do not. Oh, Lona, you do not know how I have burned to talk openly with you—to beg your forgiveness.

Lona. Now listen, Karsten; don't let us get sentimental. It doesn't suit us.

Bernick. You *shall* hear me, Lona. I know very well how much appearances are against me, since you know all that about Dina's mother. But I swear to you that it was only a short madness; at one time I really, truly, and honestly loved you.

Lona. What do you think has brought me home just now?

Bernick. Whatever you are intending, I implore you to do nothing before I have justified myself. I can do it, Lona; at least I can show that I was not altogether to blame.

Lona. Now you are frightened. You once loved me, you say. Yes, you assured me so, often enough, in your letters; and perhaps it was true, too, after a fashion, so long as you were living out there in a great, free world, that gave you courage to think freely and greatly yourself. You, perhaps, found in me a little more character, and will, and independence than in most people at home here. And then it was a secret between us two; no one could make fun of your bad taste.

Bernick. Lona, how can you think——?

Lona. But when you came home, when you saw the ridicule that poured down upon me, when you heard the laughter at what were called my eccentricities——

Bernick. You *were* extravagant then.

Lona. Principally for the sake of annoying the prudes, both in trousers and petticoats, that infested the town. And then you met that seductive young actress——

Bernick. The whole thing was a piece of folly—nothing more. I swear to you, not a tithe of the scandal and tittle-tattle was true.

Lona. Perhaps so; but then Betty came home—young,

beautiful, idolised by everyone—and when it became known that she was to have all our aunt's money and I nothing——

Bernick. Yes, here we are at the root of the matter, Lona; and now you shall hear the square truth. I did not love Betty; it was for no new fancy that I broke with you; it was entirely for the sake of the money. I was forced to do it; I *had* to make sure of the money.

Lona. And you tell me this to my face!

Bernick. Yes, I do. Hear me, Lona——!

Lona. And yet you wrote me that an unconquerable love for Betty had seized you, appealed to my magnanimity, conjured me for Betty's sake to say nothing of what had passed between us——

Bernick. I had to, I tell you.

Lona. Now, by all that's holy, I don't regret having forgotten myself as I did that day.

Bernick. Let me tell you, calmly and quietly, what my position was at that time. My mother, you know, stood at the head of the business; but she had no business ability. I was called home quickly from Paris; the times were critical; I was to retrieve the situation. What did I find? I found—what had to be kept strictly secret—a house as good as ruined. Yes, it was as good as ruined, the old, respected house, which had stood through three generations. What could I, the son, the only son, do, but look about me for a means of saving it?

Lona. So you saved the house of Bernick at the expense of a woman.

Bernick. You know very well that Betty loved me.

Lona. But I?

Bernick. Believe me, Lona, you would never have been happy with me.

Lona. Was it your care for my happiness that made you give me up?

Bernick. Perhaps you think I acted from selfish motives? If I had stood alone then, I would have begun the world again bravely and cheerfully. But you don't understand how the head of a great house becomes a living part of the business he inherits, with its enormous responsibility. Do you know that the weal and woe of hundreds, ay of thousands, depends upon him? Can you not consider that the whole community, which both you and I call our home, would have suffered deeply if the house of Bernick had fallen?

Lona. Is it for the sake of the community, then, that for these fifteen years you have stood upon a lie?

Bernick. A lie?

Lona. How much does Betty know of all that lies beneath and before her marriage with you?

Bernick. Can you think that I would wound her to no purpose by telling her these things?

Lona. To no purpose, do you say? Well, well, you are a business man; you should understand what is to the purpose. But, listen, Karsten; I, too, will speak calmly and quietly. Tell me, after all, are you really happy?

Bernick. In my family do you mean?

Lona. Of course.

Bernick. I am indeed, Lona. Oh, you have not sacrificed yourself in vain. I can say truly that I have grown happier year by year. Betty is so good and kind, and in the course of years she has learned to mould her character to what is peculiar in mine——

Lona. Hm!

Bernick. At first, indeed, she had some high-flown notions about love; she could not reconcile herself to the thought that, little by little, it must pass over into a quiet friendship.

Lona. And is she quite reconciled to that *now?*

Bernick. Entirely. You may guess that daily intercourse with me has not been without a ripening influence upon her. People must learn to moderate their personal claims if they are to fulfil their duties in the community in which they are placed. Betty has by degrees come to understand this, so that our house is now a model for our fellow-citizens.

Lona. But these fellow-citizens know nothing of the lie?

Bernick. Of the lie?

Lona. Yes; of the lie upon which you have stood for these fifteen years.

Bernick. You call that——?

Lona. I call it the lie—the threefold lie. First the lie towards me; then the lie towards Betty; then the lie towards Johan.

Bernick. Betty has never asked me to speak.

Lona. Because she has known nothing.

Bernick. And you will not ask me to; out of consideration for her you will not.

Lona. Oh, no; I daresay I shall manage to bear all the ridicule; I have a broad back.

Bernick. And Johan will not ask me either—he has promised me that.

Lona. But you, yourself, Karsten; is there not something within you that asks you to get clear of the lie?

Bernick. You would have me voluntarily sacrifice my domestic happiness and my position in society?

Lona. What right have you to stand where you are standing?

Bernick. For fifteen years I have every day gained more and more right—by my whole life, by all I have laboured for, by all I have achieved.

Lona. Yes, you have laboured for much and achieved

much, both for yourself and others. You are the richest and most powerful man in the town; they have to bow before your will, all of them, because you are held to be without stain or flaw—your home is held to be a model, your life a model. But all this eminence, and you yourself along with it, stand on a trembling quicksand; a moment may come, a word may be spoken, and, if you do not save yourself in time, you and your whole grandeur go to the bottom.

Bernick. Lona, what did you come here to do?

Lona. To help you to get firm ground under your feet, Karsten.

Bernick. Revenge! You want to revenge yourself. I thought so long ago. But you cannot do it. There is only one here who has a right to speak, and he is silent.

Lona. Johan?

Bernick. Yes, Johan. If anyone else accuses me, I shall deny all. If you try to crush me, I shall fight for my life. But I tell you you will never succeed. He who could destroy me will not speak—and he is going away again.

[RUMMEL *and* VIGELAND *enter from the right.*]

Rummel. Good-day, good-day, my dear Bernick; you must come with us to the trade council. We have a meeting on the subject of the railway, you know.

Bernick. I cannot; it is impossible just now.

Vigeland. You really must, Consul.

Rummel. You must, Bernick. There are people working against us. Editor Hammer and the others who went for the coast line, declare that there are private interests hidden behind the new proposal.

Bernick. Why, then, explain to them——

Vigeland. It does no good explaining to them, Consul.

Rummel. No, no, you must come yourself. Of course no one will dare to suspect you of anything of that sort.

Lona. No, I should think not.

Bernick. I cannot, I tell you; I am unwell;—or at any rate wait—let me collect myself.

[Rector Rörlund *enters from the right.*]

Rörlund. Excuse me, Consul; you see me most painfully agitated——

Bernick. Well, well, what is the matter with you?

Rörlund. I must ask you a question, Consul. Is it with your consent that the young girl who has found an asylum under your roof shows herself in the public streets in company with a person whom——

Lona. What person, Pastor?

Rörlund. With the person from whom, of all others in the world, she should be kept furthest apart.

Lona. Ho! ho!

Rörlund. Is it with your consent, Consul?

Bernick. I know nothing about it. [*Looking for his hat and gloves.*] Excuse me; I am in a hurry; I am going up to the trade council.

Hilmar [*comes from the garden and goes over to the furthest back door to the left*]. Betty, Betty, come here!

Mrs. Bernick [*at the door*]. What is it?

Hilmar. You must go down the garden and put an end to the flirtation which a certain person is carrying on with that Dina Dorf. It has made me quite nervous to listen to it.

Lona. Indeed? What did the certain person say?

Hilmar. Oh, only that he wants her to go with him to America. Ugh!

Rörlund. Can such things be possible?

Mrs. Bernick. *What* do you say?

Lona. Why, that would be capital.

Bernick. Impossible! You have made a mistake.

Hilmar. Then ask himself. Here comes the couple. Only let me be out of the business.

Bernick [*to Rummel and Vigeland*]. I shall follow you—in a moment——

[RUMMEL *and* VIGELAND *go out to the right.* JOHAN TÖNNESEN *and* DINA *come in from the garden.*]

Johan. Hurrah, Lona, she is coming with us!

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, Johan—how can you——!

Rörlund. Can this be true? Such a crying scandal! By what arts of seduction have you——?

Johan. What, what, man? what are you saying?

Rörlund. Answer me, Dina; is this your intention—is it your full and free determination?

Dina. I *must* get away from here.

Rörlund. But with him—with him?

Dina. Tell me of anyone else that has courage to set me free?

Rörlund. Then I must let you know who he is.

Johan. Be silent!

Bernick. Not a word more!

Rörlund. Then I should ill serve the community over whose manners and morals I am placed as a guardian; and I should act most indefensibly towards this young girl, in whose training I too have had an important part, and who is to me——

Johan. Take care what you are doing!

Rörlund. She *shall* know it! Dina, it was this man who caused all your mother's misfortune and shame.

Bernick. Rector——!

Dina. He! [*To Johan.*] Is this true?

Johan. Karsten, you answer!

Bernick. Not a word more! Not a word more to-day.

Dina. Then it is true.

Rörlund. True, true! and more than that. This person, in whom you were about to place your trust, did not run away empty-handed;—widow Bernick's strong box—the Consul can bear witness!

Lona. Liar!

Bernick. Ah——!

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, God! oh, God!

Johan [*goes towards him with uplifted arm*]. You dare to——!

Lona [*keeping him back*]. Do not strike him, Johan.

Rörlund. Yes, yes; attack me if you like. But the truth shall out; and this is the truth. Consul Bernick has said so himself, and the whole town knows it. Now, Dina, now you know him. [*A short pause.*]

Johan [*softly, seizing Bernick's arm*]. Karsten, Karsten, what have you done?

Mrs. Bernick [*softly, in tears*]. Oh, Karsten, that I should bring all this shame upon you.

Sandstad [*comes quickly in from the right, and says, with his hand still on the door-handle*] You must really come now, Consul! The whole railway is hanging by a thread.

Bernick [*absently*]. What is it? What am I to——?

Lona [*earnestly, and with emphasis*]. You are to rise and support society, brother-in-law.

Sandstadt. Yes, come, come; we need all your moral predominance.

Johan [*close to him*]. Bernick, we two will talk of this to-morrow.

[*He goes out through the garden;* BERNICK *goes out to the right with* SANDSTAD, *as if his will were paralysed.*]

ACT III.

[*The garden-room in Consul Bernick's house.*]

[BERNICK, *with a cane in his hand, enters, in a violent passion, from the furthest back room to the left, leaving the door half open behind him.*]

Bernick. There now! At last I've done it in earnest; I don't think he'll forget that thrashing. [*To someone in the other room.*] What do you say? But *I* say that you are a foolish mother! You make excuses for him, and support him in all his naughtiness. Not naughtiness? What do you call it then? To steal out of the house at night and go to sea in a fishing boat; to remain out till late in the day, and put me in mortal terror (though goodness knows I have enough anxiety without that). And the young rascal dares to threaten me with running away! Yes, just let him try it! You? No, I daresay not; you don't seem to care much what becomes of him. I believe if he were to get killed——! Oh, indeed; but I have work to leave behind me here in the world. I can't afford to be left childless. Don't argue, Betty, it must be as I say; he must be kept in the house. [*Listens.*] Hush, don't let people notice anything.

[KRAP *comes in from the right.*]

Krap. Can you spare me a moment, Consul?

Bernick [*throws away the cane*]. Of course, of course; have you come from the yard?

Krap. Just this moment. Hm——!

Bernick. Well? There's nothing wrong with the *Palm Tree*, I hope?

Krap. The *Palm Tree* can sail to-morrow, but——

Bernick. The *Indian Girl*, then? I might have guessed that that stiff-necked——

Krap. The *Indian Girl* can sail to-morrow, too; but—I don't think she will get very far.

Bernick. What do you mean?

Krap. Excuse me, Consul; that door there is ajar, and I think there is someone in the room.

Bernick [*shuts the door*]. There now. But what is the meaning of all this secrecy?

Krap. It means this: that I believe Shipbuilder Aune intends to send the *Indian Girl* to the bottom, with every soul on board.

Bernick. Good heavens! how can you think——?

Krap. I cannot explain it any other way, Consul.

Bernick. Well then, tell me in as few words as——

Krap. I shall. You know how slowly things have been going in the yard since we got the new machines and the new inexperienced workmen?

Bernick. Yes, yes.

Krap. But this morning, when I went down there, I noticed that the repairs on the American had been going at a great rate. The big patch in her bottom—the rotten place, you know——

Bernick. Yes, yes; what of it?

Krap. It was completely repaired—to all appearance; covered over; looked as good as new. I heard that Aune himself had been working at it by lantern-light the whole night through.

Bernick. Yes, yes, and then——?

Krap. I went and examined it; the workmen had just gone to their breakfast, so I was able to look about unnoticed, both outside and inside. It was difficult to get

down into the hold, as she is loaded. There is rascality at work, Consul.

Bernick. I cannot believe it, Krap. I cannot, and will not believe such a thing of Aune.

Krap. I am sorry for it, but it is the plain truth. There is rascality at work, I say. There was no new timber put in, so far as I could see. It was only botched and puttied up, and covered with tarpaulins, and so forth. All bogus! The *Indian Girl* will never get to New York. She'll go to the bottom like a cracked pot.

Bernick. But this is horrible! What do you think can be his motive?

Krap. He probably wants to bring the machines into discredit; wants to revenge himself; wants to have the old workmen taken on again.

Bernick. And for that he would sacrifice all these lives?

Krap. He has been heard to say that there are no men on board the *Indian Girl*—only beasts.

Bernick. Yes, yes, that may be; but does he not think of the immense capital that will be lost?

Krap. Aune doesn't regard immense capital with any very favourable eye, Consul.

Bernick. True enough; he is an agitator and spreader of discontent; but such a piece of villainy as this! Listen, Krap; this affair must be examined into again. Not a word of it to anyone. Our yard would fall into bad repute if people got to know anything of this sort.

Krap. Of course, but——

Bernick. During the dinner-hour you must go down there again; I must have perfect certainty.

Krap. You shall, Consul; but, excuse me, what will you do then?

Bernick. Why, report the case of course. We cannot

make ourselves accomplices in a crime. I must keep my conscience unspotted. Besides, it will make a good impression on both the press and the public at large when they see that I set aside all personal considerations and let justice take its course.

Krap. Very true, Consul.

Bernick. But, first of all, perfect certainty—and, until then, silence——

Krap. Not a word, Consul; and you shall have absolute certainty. [*He goes out through the garden and down the street.*]

Bernick [*half aloud*]. Horrible! But no, it is impossible — inconceivable!

[*As he turns to go to his own room* HILMAR TÖNNESEN *enters from the right.*]

Hilmar. Good-day, Bernick! Well, I congratulate you on your victory in the trade council yesterday.

Bernick. Oh, thanks.

Hilmar. It was a brilliant victory, I hear, the victory of intelligent public spirit over self-interest and prejudice—like a French razzia upon the Kabyles. Strange, that after the unpleasant scene here, you——

Bernick. Yes, yes, don't speak of it.

Hilmar. But the tug of war is to come yet.

Bernick. In the matter of the railway, you mean?

Hilmar. Yes, I suppose you have heard of the egg that Editor Hammer is hatching?

Bernick [*anxiously*]. No! what is it?

Hilmar. Oh, he has got hold of the report that is going about, and is going to make an article of it.

Bernick. What report?

Hilmar. Of course that about the great purchase of property along the branch line.

Bernick. What do you mean? Is there such a report?

Hilmar. Yes, over the whole town. I heard it at the club. It is said that one of our lawyers has been secretly commissioned to buy up all the forests, all the veins of ore, all the water-power——

Bernick. And is it known for whom?

Hilmar. At the club everyone thought that it must be for a company from some other town that had got wind of your scheme, and had rushed in before the prices rose. Isn't it mean? disgraceful? Ugh!

Bernick. Disgraceful?

Hilmar. Yes, that strangers should trespass on our preserves in that way. And that one of our own lawyers could lend himself to anything like that! Now, all the profit will go to strangers.

Bernick. But this is only a vague rumour.

Hilmar. It is believed at any rate; and to-morrow or next day Editor Hammer will, of course, go and nail it fast as a fact. Everyone was enraged about it already up there. I heard several say that if this rumour is confirmed they will strike their names off the lists.

Bernick. Impossible!

Hilmar. Indeed? Why do you think these peddling creatures were so ready to join you in your undertaking? Do you think they weren't themselves hankering after——?

Bernick. Impossible, I say; there is at least so much public spirit in our little community——

Hilmar. Here? Oh, yes, you are an optimist, and judge others by yourself. But I am a pretty keen observer. There is not a person here—with the exception of ourselves, of course—not one, I say, who holds high the banner of the ideal. [*Up towards the background.*] Ugh, there they are!

Bernick. Who?

Hilmar. The two Americans. [*Looks out to the right.*] And who is that they are with? Why, it's the captain of the *Indian Girl.* Ugh!

Bernick. What can they want with him?

Hilmar. Oh, it's very appropriate company. They say he has been a slave-dealer or a pirate; and who knows what that couple have turned their hands to in all these years.

Bernick. I tell you, it is utterly unjust to think so of them.

Hilmar. Yes, you are an optimist. But here we have them upon us again; so I'll get away in time.

[*Goes towards the door on the left.*]

[LONA HESSEL *enters by the door on the right.*]

Lona. What, Hilmar, am I driving you away?

Hilmar. Not at all, not at all. I am in a great hurry; I have something to say to Betty.

[*Goes out by the furthest back door on the left.*]

Bernick [*after a short pause*]. Well, Lona?

Lona. Well?

Bernick. What do you think of me to-day?

Lona. The same as yesterday; a lie more or less——!

Bernick. I must explain all this. Where has Johan gone to?

Lona. He'll be here directly; he had to talk to a man out there.

Bernick. After what you heard yesterday, you can understand that my whole position is ruined if the truth comes to light.

Lona. I understand.

Bernick. Of course you know well enough that *I* was not guilty of the supposed crime.

Lona. Of course not. But who was the thief?

Bernick. There was no thief. There was no money stolen; not a halfpenny was wanting.

Lona. What?

Bernick. Not a halfpenny, I say.

Lona. But the rumour? How did that shameful rumour get abroad that Johan——?

Bernick. Lona, I find I can talk to you as I can to no other person; I shall conceal nothing from you. *I* had my share in spreading the rumour.

Lona. You! And you could do this wrong to the man who, for your sake——?

Bernick. You must not condemn me without remembering how matters stood at the time. As I told you yesterday, I came home to find my mother involved in a whole series of foolish undertakings. Misfortunes of various kinds followed. It seemed as if all possible ill-luck came upon us at once; our house was on the verge of ruin. I was half reckless and half in despair, Lona. I believe it was principally to deaden my thoughts that I got into that entanglement which ended in Johan's running away.

Lona. Hm——

Bernick. You can easily imagine how all sorts of rumours got abroad after he and you left. It was said that this was not his first misdemeanour. Some said Dorf had received a large sum of money from him to keep quiet and go away; others declared that she had got the money. At the same time it got abroad that our house had difficulty in meeting its engagements. What was more natural than that the gossips should put these two rumours together? As Madam Dorf remained here in unmistakable poverty, people began to say that he had taken the money with him to America, and rumour made the sum larger and larger every day.

Lona. And you, Karsten——?

Bernick. I clutched at the rumour as a drowning man clutches at a straw.

Lona. You helped to spread it?

Bernick. I did not contradict it. Our creditors were beginning to press upon us; what I had to do was to quiet them; the thing was to keep the people from suspecting the solidity of the firm. A momentary misfortune had befallen us, but if people only refrained from pressing us, if they would only give us time, everyone could have his own.

Lona. And everyone got his own?

Bernick. Yes, Lona, that rumour saved our house, and made me the man I now am.

Lona. A lie, then, has made you the man you now are.

Bernick. Whom did it hurt, then? Johan intended never to return.

Lona. You ask whom it hurt. Look into yourself and see if it has not hurt you.

Bernick. Look into any man you please, and you will find at least one dark spot which he must keep covered.

Lona. And you call yourselves the pillars of society!

Bernick. Society has none better.

Lona. Then what does it matter whether such a society is supported or not? What is it that passes current here? Lies and shams—nothing else. Here are you, the first man in the town, living in wealth and pride, in power and honour, you, who have set the brand of crime upon an innocent man.

Bernick. Do you think I do not feel deeply how I have wronged him? Do you think I am not prepared to make atonement?

Lona. How? By speaking out?

Bernick. Can you ask such a thing?

Lona. What else can atone for such a wrong?

Bernick. I am rich, Lona; Johan may ask what he pleases——

Lona. Yes, offer him money, and you'll see what he'll answer.

Bernick. Do you know what he intends to do?

Lona. No. Since yesterday he has been silent. It seems as if all this had suddenly made a full-grown man of him.

Bernick. I must speak to him.

Lona. Then here he is.

[JOHAN TÖNNESEN *enters from the right.*]

Bernick [*going towards him*]. Johan——!

Johan. Let me speak first. Yesterday morning I gave you my word to be silent.

Bernick. You did.

Johan. But I did not know then——

Bernick. Johan, let me in two words explain the circumstances——

Johan. There is no need; I understand the circumstances very well. Your house was then in a difficult position; and when I was no longer here, and you had my unprotected name and fame to do what you liked with—— Well, I don't blame you so much for it; we were young and heedless in those days. But now I have need of the truth, and now you must speak out.

Bernick. And just now I need all my moral repute, and so cannot speak out.

Johan. I don't care so much about the falsehoods you have spread abroad about me; it is the other thing you yourself must take the blame of. Dina shall be my wife, and I shall live here, here in this town, along with her.

Lona. You will?

Bernick. With Dina! As your wife? Here, in this town?

Johan. Yes, just here; I shall remain here to defy all these liars and backbiters. And that I may win her, you must set me free.

Bernick. Have you considered that to admit the one thing is to admit the other as well? You may say that I can prove by our books that there was no robbery at all. But I cannot; our books weren't kept so exactly at that time. And even if I could, what would be gained by it? Should I not, at best, appear as the man who had once saved himself by a falsehood, and who, for fifteen years, had let that falsehood, and all its consequences, stand untouched, without saying a word against it? You have forgotten what our society is, or you would know that that would crush me to the very dust.

Johan. I can only repeat to you that I shall make Madam Dorf's daughter my wife, and live with her here in the town.

Bernick [*wipes the perspiration from his forehead*]. Hear me, Johan—and you, too, Lona. The circumstances in which I am placed at this moment are not ordinary ones. I am so situated, that if you strike this blow you ruin me utterly, and not only me, but also a great and blessed future for the community which was the home of your childhood.

Johan. And if I do not strike the blow, I destroy the whole happiness of my future life.

Lona. Go on, Karsten.

Bernick. Then listen. It all arises from this affair of the railway, and that is not so simple as you think. You have, of course, heard that last year there was a talk of a coast-line? It had many and powerful advocates in the town

and neighbourhood, and especially in the press; but I got it shelved, because it would have injured our steamboat trade along the coast.

Lona. Have you an interest in this steamboat trade?

Bernick. Yes. But no one dared to suspect me on that account. My honoured name was an ample safeguard. For that matter, I could have borne the loss; but the town could not have borne it. Then the inland line was determined on. When that was settled, I assured myself secretly that a branch line could be constructed down to the town.

Lona. Why secretly, Karsten?

Bernick. Have you heard any talk of the great buying-up of forests, mines, and water-power.

Johan. Yes, for a company in some other town——

Bernick. As these properties now lie, they are as good as worthless to their scattered owners; so they have been sold comparatively cheap. If the buyer had waited until the branch line was generally spoken of, the holders would have demanded fancy prices.

Lona. Very likely; but what then?

Bernick. Now comes the point which may or may not be interpreted favourably—a thing which no man in our community could risk, unless he had a spotless and honoured name to rely upon.

Lona. Well?

Bernick. It is I who have bought in the whole.

Lona. You?

Johan. On your own account?

Bernick. On my own account. If the branch line is made, I am a millionaire; if it is not made, I am ruined.

Lona. This is a great risk, Karsten.

Bernick. I have staked all I possess upon the throw.

Lona. I was not thinking of the money; but when it is known that——

Bernick. Yes, that is the great point. With the spotless name I have hitherto borne, I can take the whole affair upon my shoulders and carry it through, saying to my fellow-citizens, "See, this I have dared for the good of the community!"

Lona. Of the community?

Bernick. Yes; and not one will question my motives.

Lona. Then, after all, there are men here who have acted more openly than you, with no concealed motives, without private considerations.

Bernick. Who?

Lona. Why, of course, Rummel and Sandstad and Vigeland.

Bernick. To gain them over I had to let them into the secret.

Lona. And then?

Bernick. They have stipulated for a fifth of the profits to be divided between them.

Lona. Oh, these pillars of society!

Bernick. Don't you see that it is society itself that forces us into these subterfuges? What would have happened if I had not acted secretly? Why, everyone would have thrown himself into the undertaking, and the whole thing would have been broken up, divided, bungled, and spoiled. There is not a single man in the town here, except myself, that knows how to manage an enormous concern such as this will become; in this country the men of real business ability are almost all of foreign origin. That is why my conscience acquits me in this matter. Only in my hands can all these properties become a lasting benefit to the many who will make their bread out of them.

Lona. I believe you are right there, Karsten.

Johan. But I know nothing of "the many," and my life's happiness is at stake.

Bernick. The welfare of your native place is also at stake. If things come to the surface which cast a slur upon my former conduct, all my opponents will fall upon me with united strength. A boyish error is never atoned for in our society. People will go over my whole life during the interval, will rake up a thousand little circumstances, and explain and interpret them in the light of what has been discovered; they will crush me beneath the weight of rumours and slanders. I shall have to retire from the railway affairs; and if I take my hand away the whole thing will fall to pieces, and I shall lose both my fortune and, as it were, my social life.

Lona. Johan, after what you have heard you must be silent and go away.

Bernick. Yes, yes, Johan, you must.

Johan. Yes, I shall go away, and be silent too; but I shall come back again, and then I shall speak.

Bernick. Remain over there, Johan; be silent, and I am ready to share with you——

Johan. Keep your money, and give me back my name and fame.

Bernick. And sacrifice my own!

Johan. You and your society must settle that! I must, and shall, and will win Dina for myself. So I shall sail to-morrow with the *Indian Girl.*

Bernick. With the *Indian Girl?*

Johan. Yes; the captain has promised to take me. I shall go over, I tell you; I shall sell my farm, and arrange my affairs. In two months I shall be back again.

Bernick. And then you will tell all?

Johan. Then the guilty one must take the guilt upon himself.

Bernick. Do you forget that I must also take upon me guilt which is not mine?

Johan. Who was it that, fifteen years ago, reaped the benefit of that shameful report?

Bernick. You drive me to desperation! But, if you speak, I shall deny all! I shall say it is a conspiracy against me; a piece of revenge; that you have come here to blackmail me!

Lona. Shame on you, Karsten!

Bernick. I am desperate, I tell you; I am fighting for my life. I shall deny all, all!

Johan. I have your two letters. I found them in my box among my other papers. I read them through this morning; they are plain enough.

Bernick. And you will produce them?

Johan. If you force me.

Bernick. And in two months you will be here again?

Johan. I hope so. The wind is good. In three weeks I shall be in New York, if the *Indian Girl* doesn't go to the bottom.

Bernick [*starting*]. Go to the bottom? Why should the *Indian Girl* go to the bottom?

Johan. Yes, that's just what I say.

Bernick [*almost inaudibly*]. Go to the bottom?

Johan. Well, Bernick, now you know what you have to expect; you must do what you can in the meantime. Good-bye! Give my love to Betty, though she certainly hasn't received me in the most sisterly fashion. But Martha I must see. She must say to Dina—she must promise me—— [*He goes out by the furthest back door on the left.*]

Bernick [*to himself*]. The *Indian Girl*——? [*Quickly.*] Lona, you must get this stopped!

Lona. You see yourself, Karsten—I have no longer any power over him.

[*She follows Johan into the room on the left.*]

Bernick [*in unquiet thought.*] Go to the bottom——?

[AUNE *enters from the right.*]

Aune. Excuse me, Consul, are you disengaged——?

Bernick [*turns angrily*]. What do you want?

Aune. I wish, with your leave, to ask you a question, Consul Bernick.

Bernick. Well, well; be quick. What do you want to ask about?

Aune. I want to know if it is your determination,—your fixed determination—to dismiss me, if the *Indian Girl* should not be able to sail to-morrow?

Bernick. What now? The ship *will* be ready to sail.

Aune. Yes—she will. But supposing she were not—should I be dismissed?

Bernick. Why do you ask such a useless question?

Aune. I want very much to know, Consul. Just answer me: should I be dismissed?

Bernick. Do I generally change my mind?

Aune. Then I should to-morrow have lost the position I now hold in my home and in my family—lost all my influence over the workmen—lost all opportunity of advancing the cause of the needy and oppressed?

Bernick. Aune, we have discussed that point long ago.

Aune. Yes—then the *Indian Girl* must sail.

[*A short pause.*]

Bernick. Listen; I cannot look after everything myself; cannot be responsible for everything. I suppose you are prepared to assure me that the repairs are thoroughly carried out?

Aune. You gave me very short time, Consul.

Bernick. But the repairs are all right, you say?

Aune. The weather is fine, and it is midsummer.

[*Another pause.*]

Bernick. Have you anything more to say to me

Aune. I don't know of anything else, Consul.

Bernick. Then—the *Indian Girl* sails——

Aune. To-morrow?

Bernick. Yes.

Aune. Very well. [*He bows and goes out.*]

[BERNICK *stands for a moment undecided; then he goes quickly to the door as if to call* AUNE *back, but stops and stands hesitating with his hand on the handle. Immediately after the door is opened from outside and* KRAP *enters.*]

Krap (*speaking low*). Aha, he has been here. Has he confessed?

Bernick. Hm——; have you discovered anything?

Krap. What need was there? Did you not see the evil conscience looking out of his very eyes?

Bernick. Oh, nonsense;—such things are not to be seen. Have you discovered anything, I ask?

Krap. I couldn't get to the place; I was too late; they were busy hauling the ship out of the dock. But this very haste proves plainly that——

Bernick. It proves nothing. The inspection has taken place, then?

Krap. Of course; but——

Bernick. There you see! and of course they have found nothing to complain of?

Krap. Consul, you know very well how such inspections are conducted, especially in a yard that has such a good name as ours.

Bernick. That does not matter; it relieves us of all reproach.

Krap. Could you really not see, Consul, from Aune's very look that——?

Bernick. Aune has entirely satisfied me, I tell you.

Krap. And I tell you I am morally convinced——

Bernick. What does this mean, Krap? I know very well that you have a grudge against the man; but if you want to attack him, you should choose some other opportunity. You know how necessary it is for me—or rather for the owners—that the *Indian Girl* should sail to-morrow.

Krap. Very well; so be it; but if ever we hear again of that ship—hm!

[VIGELAND *enters from the right.*]

Vigeland. How do you do, Consul? Have you a moment to spare?

Bernick. At your service, Mr. Vigeland.

Vigeland. I only want to know if you agree with me that the *Palm Tree* should sail to-morrow.

Bernick. Yes—I thought that was settled.

Vigeland. But the captain has just come to tell me that the storm-signals have been hoisted.

Krap. The barometer has fallen rapidly since this morning.

Bernick. Indeed? Is there a storm coming?

Vigeland. A stiff gale at any rate; but not a contrary wind; quite the reverse——

Bernick. Hm; what do you say, then?

Vigeland. I say as I said to the captain, that the *Palm Tree* is in the hands of Providence. And besides, she's only going over the North Sea to begin with; and freights are tolerably high in England just now, so that——

Bernick. Yes, it would probably be a loss to us if we delayed.

Vigeland. The vessel's well built, you know, and fully insured as well. I can tell you it's another matter with the *Indian Girl*——

Bernick. What do you mean?

Vigeland. Why, she is to sail to-morrow too.

Bernick. Yes, the owners hurried us on, and besides——

Vigeland. Well, if that old hulk can venture out—and with such a crew into the bargain—it would be a shame if we couldn't——

Bernick. Well, well; I suppose you have got the ship's papers with you.

Vigeland. Yes, here they are.

Bernick. Good; perhaps you will go with Mr. Krap.

Krap. This way, please; we'll soon put them in order.

Vigeland. Thanks—— And the result we will leave in the hands of Omnipotence, Consul.

[*He goes with* KRAP *into the foremost room on the left.* RECTOR RÖRLUND *comes through the garden.*]

Rörlund. Ah, is it possible you are to be found at home at this time of the day, Consul?

Bernick [*absently*]. As you see!

Rörlund. It was really to see your wife that I looked in. I thought she might need a word of consolation.

Bernick. I daresay she does. But I also should like to have a word or two with you.

Rörlund. With pleasure, Consul. But what is the matter with you? You look quite pale and disturbed.

Bernick. Indeed? Do I? Well, it could scarcely be otherwise, with such a lot of things besetting me all at once. In addition to all my usual business, I have this affair of

the railway. Listen a moment, Rector; let me ask you a question.

Rörlund. With great pleasure, Consul.

Bernick. A thought has occurred to me lately. When one stands at the commencement of a wide-stretching undertaking, intended to promote the welfare of thousands, if a single sacrifice should be demanded——?

Rörlund. How do you mean?

Bernick. Take, for example, a man who is starting a great manufactory. He knows very certainly—for all experience has taught him so—that sooner or later, in the working of that manufactory, human life will be lost.

Rörlund. Yes, it is only too probable.

Bernick. Or he is engaged in mining operations. He takes both fathers of families and young men in the heyday of life into his service. Cannot it be said with certainty that some of these are bound to perish in the undertaking?

Rörlund. Unfortunately there can be little doubt of that.

Bernick. Well; such a man, then, knows beforehand that his enterprise will undoubtedly, sometime or other, lead to the loss of life. But the undertaking is for the greater good of the greater number; for every life it costs, it will, with equal certainty, promote the welfare of many hundreds.

Rörlund. Aha, you are thinking of the railway—of all the dangerous tunnellings and blastings, and that sort of thing——

Bernick. Yes—yes, of course; I am thinking of the railway. And, besides, the railway will bring in its train both manufactories and mines. But don't you think that——

Rörlund. My dear Consul, you are almost too Quixotic. If you place the affair in the hand of Providence——

Bernick. Yes—yes, of course; Providence——

Rörlund. ——You can have nothing to reproach yourself with. Go on and prosper with the railway.

Bernick. Yes, but let us take a peculiar case. Let us suppose a mine had to be sprung at a dangerous place; and, unless it was sprung, the railway would come to a standstill. Suppose the engineer knows that it will cost the life of the workman who fires the train; but fired it must be, and it is the engineer's duty to send a workman to do it.

Rörlund. Hm——

Bernick. I know what you will say: It would be noble for the engineer himself to take the match and go and fire the train. But no one does such things. Then he must sacrifice a workman.

Rörlund. No engineer among us would ever do that.

Bernick. No engineer in the great nations would think twice about doing it.

Rörlund. In the great nations. No, I dare say not. In these depraved and unprincipled communities——

Bernick. Oh, these communities have their good points, too.

Rörlund. Can you say that you, who yourself——?

Bernick. In the great nations one has always room to press forward a useful project. There, one has courage to sacrifice something for a great cause; but here, one is cramped in by all sorts of petty considerations.

Rörlund. Is a human life a petty consideration?

Bernick. When that human life threatens the welfare of thousands.

Rörlund. But you are putting quite impossible cases, Consul. I don't understand you to-day. And you refer me to the great communities. Yes, there—what does a human life count for there? They think less of lives than of profits. But we, I hope, look at things from an entirely

different moral standpoint. Think of our noble shipowners! Name me a single merchant here among us who, for paltry gain, would sacrifice a single life. And then think of these scoundrels in the great communities who make money by sending out one unseaworthy ship after another——

Bernick. I am not speaking of unseaworthy ships.

Rörlund. But I am, Consul.

Bernick. Yes, but to what purpose? It is quite away from the question. Oh, these little timid considerations! If a general among us were to lead his troops under fire, and get some of them shot, he wouldn't be able to sleep at night after it. It is not so in other places. You should hear what he says——[*pointing to the door on the left.*]

Rörlund. He? Who? the American?

Bernick. Of course. You should hear how people in America——

Rörlund. Is he in there? Why didn't you tell me. I shall go at once——

Bernick. It is of no use. You will make no impression upon him.

Rörlund. That we shall see. Ah, here he is.

[JOHAN TÖNNESEN *comes from the room on the left.*]

Johan [*speaking through the open doorway*]. Yes, yes, Dina, so be it; but I shall not give you up all the same. I shall return, and things will come all right between us.

Rörlund. Allow me. What do you mean by these words? What do you want?

Johan. I want that young girl, before whom you yesterday slandered me, to be wife.

Rörlund. Yours? Can you think that——?

Johan. She *shall* be my wife.

Rörlund. Well, then, you shall hear——[*Goes to the half-open door.*] Mrs. Bernick, you must have the kindness to be a witness. And you too, Miss Martha; and let Dina come too. [*Sees Lona.*] Ah, are you here?

Lona [*at the door*]. Shall I come too?

Rörlund. As many as will—the more the better.

Bernick. What are you going to do?

[LONA, MRS. BERNICK, MARTHA, DINA, *and* HILMAR TÖNNESEN *come out of the room on the left.*]

Mrs Bernick. Rector, all I can do cannot prevent him from——

Rörlund. I shall prevent him, Mrs. Bernick. Dina, you are a thoughtless girl. But I do not blame you very much. You have stood here too long without the moral support that should have kept you up. I blame myself for not having given you that support.

Dina. You must not speak now!

Mrs. Bernick. What is all this?

Rörlund. It is now that I must speak, Dina, though your behaviour to-day has rendered it ten times more difficult for me. But all other considerations must give place to your rescue. You remember the promise I gave you. You remember what you promised to answer, when I found that the time had come. Now I can hesitate no longer, and therefore—[*to Johan Tönnesen*] this young girl, whom you are pursuing, is my betrothed.

Mrs. Bernick. What do you say?

Bernick. Dina!

Johan. She! Yours——?

Martha. No, no, Dina.

Lona. A lie!

Johan. Dina, does that man speak the truth?

Dina [*after a short pause*]. Yes.

Rörlund. This, I trust, will paralyse all your arts of seduction. The step I have determined to take for Dina's welfare may now be made known to our whole community. I hope—nay, I am sure—that it will not be misinterpreted. And now, Mrs. Bernick, I think we had better take her away from here and try to restore the peace and equilibrium of her mind.

Mrs. Bernick. Yes, come. Oh, Dina, what a happiness for you!

[*She leads* DINA *out to the left;* RECTOR RÖRLUND *goes along with them.*]

Martha. Good-bye, Johan! [*She goes out.*]

Hilmar [*at the garden door*]. Hm—well I really must say——

Lona [*who has been following Dina with her eyes*]. Don't be cast down, boy! I shall remain here and look after the Pastor.

Bernick. Johan, you won't go now with the *Indian Girl!*

Johan. Now more than ever.

Bernick. Then you will not come back again?

Johan. I shall come back again.

Bernick. After this? What can you do after this?

Johan. Revenge myself on you all; crush as many of you as I can.

[*He goes out to the right.* VIGELAND *and* KRAP *come from the Consul's office.*]

Vigeland. See, the papers are in order now, Consul.

Bernick. Good, good——

Krap [*aside*]. Then it is settled that the *Indian Girl* is to sail to-morrow?

Bernick. She is to sail.

[*He goes into his room.* VIGELAND *and* KRAP *go out to the right.* HILMAR TÖNNESEN *is following them, when* OLAF *peeps cautiously out at the door on the left.*]

Olaf. Uncle! Uncle Hilmar!

Hilmar. Ugh, is that you? Why don't you remain upstairs? You know you are under arrest.

Olaf [*comes a few steps forward*]. Hush! Uncle Hilmar, do you know the news?

Hilmar. Yes, I know that you got a thrashing to-day.

Olaf [*looks threateningly towards his father's room*]. He shan't thrash me again. But do you know that Uncle Johan is to sail to-morrow with the Americans?

Hilmar. What is that to you? You get upstairs again!

Olaf. Perhaps I may go buffalo-hunting yet, uncle.

Hilmar. Rubbish; such a coward as you——

Olaf. Just wait a little; you'll hear something to-morrow!

Hilmar. Little blockhead!

[*He goes out through the garden.* OLAF *runs out of the room and shuts the door, when he catches sight of* KRAP, *who comes from the right.*]

Krap. [*goes up to the Consul's door and opens it a little*]. Excuse my coming again, Consul, but there's a terrible storm brewing. [*He waits a moment; there is no answer.*] Is the *Indian Girl* to sail in spite of it? [*After a short pause.*]

Bernick [*answers from the office*]. The *Indian Girl* is to sail in spite of it.

[KRAP *shuts the door and goes out again to the right.*]

ACT IV.

[*The garden-room in* CONSUL BERNICK'S *house. The table has been removed. It is a stormy evening, already half dark, and growing darker.*]

[*A servant lights the chandelier, two maid-servants bring in flower-pots, lamps, and candles, which are placed on tables and shelves along the wall.* RUMMEL, *wearing a dress coat, white gloves, and a white necktie, stands in the room giving directions.*]

Rummel [*to the servant*]. Only every second candle, Jacob. The place mustn't look too brilliant; it is supposed to be a surprise, you know. And all these flowers——? Oh, yes, let them stand; it will seem as if they were there always.

[CONSUL BERNICK *comes out of his room.*]

Bernick [*at the door*]. What is the meaning of all this?

Rummel. Oh, are you there? [*To the servants.*] Yes, you can go now.

[*The servants go out by the farthest back door on the left.*]

Bernick [*coming into the room*]. Why, Rummel, what can all this mean?

Rummel. It means that the proudest moment of your life has arrived. The whole town is coming in procession to do honour to its leading citizen.

Bernick. What do you mean?

Rummel. In procession and with music! We should have had torches too; but we dared not attempt it in this stormy weather. But there's to be an illumination; and it will look quite splendid in the newspapers.

Bernick. Listen, Rummel—I will have nothing to do with all this.

Rummel. Oh, it's too late now; they'll be here in half-an-hour.

Bernick. Why have you not told me of this before?

Rummel. Just because I was afraid you would make objections. But I arranged it all with your wife; she allowed me to put things in order a little, and she is going to look to the refreshments herself.

Bernick [*listening*]. What is that? Are they coming already? I thought I heard singing.

Rummel [*at the garden door*]. Singing? Oh, it is only the Americans. They are hauling out the *Indian Girl* to the buoy.

Bernick. Hauling her out! Yes——; I really cannot this evening, Rummel; I am not well.

Rummel. You are certainly not looking well. But you must brace yourself up. Come, come, man, you must brace yourself up. I and Sandstad and Vigeland attach the greatest importance to getting this affair managed. Our opponents must be crushed under the weight of the unanimous utterance of public opinion. The rumours are spreading over the town; the announcement as to the purchase of the property can't be kept back any longer. This very evening, amid songs and speeches and the ring of brimming goblets, in short, amid all the effervescent festivity of the occasion, you must let them know what you have ventured for the good of the community. With the aid of such effervescent festivity, as I have just expressed it, it's astonishing what one can effect here among us. But we must have the effervescence, or it won't do.

Bernick. Yes, yes, yes——

Rummel. And especially when such a difficult and delicate matter is to be brought forward. You have, thank Heaven, a name that will carry us through, Bernick. But listen

now ; we must make some arrangement. Hilmar Tönnesen has written a song in your honour. It begins very prettily with the line, "Wave th' Ideal's banner high." And Rector Rörlund has been commissioned to make the speech of the evening. Of course you must reply to it.

Bernick. I cannot, I cannot this evening, Rummel. Could not you——?

Rummel. Impossible, however much I might like to. The speech will, of course, be mainly directed to you. Perhaps a few words will be devoted to the rest of us. I have spoken to Vigeland and Sandstad about it. We had arranged that you should answer with a toast to the welfare of the community ; Sandstad should say a few words on the union between the different classes of the community ; Vigeland should express the fervent hope that our new undertaking may not disturb the moral foundation upon which we have placed the community; and I should call attention, in a few well-chosen words, to the claims of Woman, whose more modest activity is not without its use in the community. But you are not listening.

Bernick. Yes—yes, I am. But, tell me, do you think the sea is running very high outside ?

Rummel. Oh, you are anxious on account of the *Palm Tree?* She's well insured, isn't she ?

Bernick. Yes, insured ; but——

Rummel. And in good repair ; and that's the main thing.

Bernick. Hm—and even if anything happens to a vessel, it doesn't follow that lives will be lost. The ship and cargo may go to the bottom—people may lose chests and papers——

Rummel. Good gracious, chests and papers aren't of so much importance.

Bernick. You think not! No, no, I only meant—— Hark ;—that singing again !

Rummel. It is on board the *Palm Tree.*

[VIGELAND *enters from the right.*]

Vigeland. Yes, they're hauling out the *Palm Tree.* Good evening, Consul!

Bernick. And you, who know the sea well, hold fast to——?

Vigeland. I hold fast to Providence, Consul; besides, I have been on board and distributed a few little tracts, which I hope will act with a blessing.

[SANDSTAD *and* KRAP *enter from the right.*]

Sandstad [*at the door*]. It's a miracle if they escape. Ah, here we are—good evening, good evening.

Bernick. Is anything the matter, Krap?

Krap. I have nothing to say, Consul.

Sandstad. Every man on board the *Indian Girl* is drunk. If these animals ever get over alive, I'm no prophet.

[LONA *comes from the right.*]

Lona [*to Bernick*]. Well, I've been seeing him off.

Bernick. Is he on board already?

Lona. Will be soon, at any rate. We parted outside the hotel.

Bernick. And he holds to his purpose?

Lona. Firm as a rock.

Rummel [*at one of the windows*]. Deuce take these new-fashioned arrangements. I can't get the blinds down.

Lona. Are they to come down? I thought, on the contrary——

Rummel. They are to be down at first, Miss Hessel. Of course you know what is going on?

Lona. Oh, of course. Let me help you;—[*takes one of the*

cords.] I shall let the curtain fall upon my brother-in-law—though I would rather raise it.

Rummel. That you can do later. When the garden is filled with a surging crowd, then the curtains rise, and they look in upon a surprised and happy family—a citizen's house should be transparent to all the world.

[BERNICK *seems about to say something, but turns quickly and goes into his office.*]

Rummel. Well, let us hold our last council of war. Come, Mr. Krap; we want you to supply us with a few facts.

[*All the men go into the Consul's office.* LONA *has lowered all the window-blinds, and is just going to draw the curtain over the open glass-door, when* OLAF *jumps down from above upon the garden stair; he has a plaid over his shoulder and a bundle in his hand.*]

Lona. Good heavens, child, how you frightened me!

Olaf [*hiding the bundle*]. Hush, aunt!

Lona. Why did you jump out at the window? Where are you going?

Olaf. Hush, don't say anything, aunt. I am going to Uncle Johan; only down to the pier, you understand;—only to say good-bye to him. Good-night, aunt!

[*He runs out through the garden.*

Lona. No! stop! Olaf—Olaf!

[JOHAN TÖNNESEN, *dressed for a journey, with a bag over his shoulder, steals in by the door on the right.*]

Johan. Lona!

Lona [*turning*]. What! you here again?

Johan. There are still a few minutes to spare. I must see her once more. We cannot part so.

[MARTHA *and* DINA, *both with cloaks on, and the latter with a little knapsack in her hand, enter from the furthest back door on the left.*]

Dina. To him; to him!

Martha. Yes, you shall go to him, Dina!

Dina. There he is!

Johan. Dina!

Dina. Take me with you!

Johan. What!

Lona. You will?

Dina. Yes, take me with you. The other one has written to me saying that this evening it shall be announced publicly to everyone——

Johan. Dina—you do not love him?

Dina. I never have loved the man. I would rather be at the bottom of the fjord than be betrothed to him! Oh, how he seemed to make me grovel before him yesterday with his patronising words! How he made me feel that he was stooping to an abject creature! I will not be despised any more! I will go away! May I come with you?

Johan. Yes, yes—a thousand times yes!

Dina. I shall not be a burden on you long. Only help me over there; help me to make a start——

Johan. Hurrah! We'll manage all that, Dina!

Lona [*pointing to the Consul's door*]. Hush; don't speak so loud.

Johan. Dina, I shall shield and protect you.

Dina. I will not allow you to. I will make my own way; over there I shall manage well enough. Only let me get away from here. Oh, these women—you do not know—they have written to me to-day; they have exhorted me to appreciate my good fortune; they have impressed upon me what magnanimity he has shown. To-morrow, and forever after, they will be watching me to see whether I render myself worthy of it all. I am sick of all this goodness.

Johan. Tell me, Dina, is that your only reason for coming? Am I nothing to you?

Dina. Yes, Johan, you are more to me than anyone else.

Johan. Oh, Dina!

Dina. They all say here that I must hate and detest you; that it is my duty; but I don't understand what they mean by duty; I never could understand it.

Lona. And you never shall, my child!

Martha. No, you shall not; and that is why you must go with him as his wife.

Johan. Yes, yes!

Lona. What? Now I must kiss you, Martha! I did not expect this of you.

Martha. No, I daresay not; I did not expect it myself. But sooner or later the crisis was bound to come. Oh, how we writhe under this tyranny of custom and convention! Rebel against it, Dina. Become his wife! Do something to defy all this use-and-wont!

Johan. What is your answer, Dina?

Dina. Yes, I will be your wife.

Johan. Dina!

Dina. But first I will work, and become something for myself, just as you are. I will give myself, I will not be taken.

Lona. Right, right! So it should be!

Johan. Good; I shall wait and hope——

Lona. ——and win too, boy! But now, on board!

Johan. Yes, on board! Ah, Lona, my dear sister, one word; come here——

[*He leads her up towards the background and talks quietly to her.*]

Martha. Dina, you happy one—let me look at you and kiss you once more—for the last time.

Dina. Not the last time; no, my dear, dear aunt; we shall meet again.

Martha. Never! Promise me, Dina, never to come back again. [*Takes both her hands and looks into her face.*] Now go to your happiness, my dear child, over the sea. Oh, how often have I sat in the school-room and longed to be over there! It must be beautiful there; the heaven is wider; the clouds sail higher than here; a freer air streams over the heads of the people——

Dina. Oh, Aunt Martha, you will follow us some day.

Martha. I? Never, never. Here I have my little life-work, and now I think I can be fully and wholly what I should be.

Dina. I cannot think of being parted from you.

Martha. Ah, one can part from so much, Dina. [*Kisses her.*] But you will never know it, my sweet child. Promise me to make him happy.

Dina. I will not promise anything. I hate this promising; things must come as they can.

Martha. Yes, yes, so they must; you need only remain as you are—true, and faithful to yourself.

Dina. That I will, Aunt Martha.

Lona [*puts in her pocket some papers which Johan has given her*]. Good, good, my dear boy. But now, away.

Johan. Yes, now there's no time to be lost. Good-bye, Lona; thank you for all your love for me. Good-bye, Martha, and thanks to you, too, for your true friendship.

Martha. Good-bye, Johan! Good-bye, Dina! And happiness be over all your days!

[*She and* LONA *hurry them towards the door in the background.* JOHAN TÖNNESEN *and* DINA *go quickly out through the garden.* LONA *shuts the door and draws the curtain.*]

Lona. Now we are alone, Martha. You have lost her, and I him.

Martha. You—him?

Lona. Oh, I had half lost him already over there. The boy longed to stand on his own feet; so I made him think *I* was longing for home.

Martha. That was it? Now I understand why you came. But he will want you back again, Lona.

Lona. An old step-sister—what can he want with her now? Men snap many bonds to arrive at happiness.

Martha. It is so, sometimes.

Lona. But now we two must hold together, Martha.

Martha. Can I be anything to you?

Lona. Who more? We two foster-mothers—have we not both lost our children? Now we are alone.

Martha. Yes, alone. And therefore I will tell you—I have loved him more than all the world.

Lona. Martha! [*Seizes her arm.*] Is this the truth?

Martha. My whole life lies in the words. I have loved him, and waited for him. From summer to summer I have looked for his coming. And then he came—but he did not see me.

Lona. Loved him! and it was you that gave his happiness into his hands.

Martha. Should I not have given him his happiness, since I loved him? Yes, I have loved him. My whole life has been for him, ever since he went away. What reason had I to hope, you ask? Well, I think I had *some* reason. But then, when he came again—it seemed as if everything were wiped out of his memory. He did not see me.

Lona. It was Dina that overshadowed you, Martha.

Martha. It is well that she did! When he went away

we were of the same age; when I saw him again—oh, that horrible moment—it seemed to me that I was ten years older than he. He had lived in the bright, quivering sunshine, and drunk in youth and health at every breath; and here sat I the while, spinning and spinning——

Lona. The thread of his happiness, Martha.

Martha. Yes, it was gold I spun. No bitterness! Is it not true, Lona, we have been two good sisters to him?

Lona [*embraces her*]. Martha!

[CONSUL BERNICK *comes out of his room.*]

Bernick [*to the men inside*]. Yes, yes, manage the whole thing as you please. When the time comes, I shall be ready —— [*Shuts the door.*] Ah, are you there. Listen, Martha, you must look to your dress a little. And tell Betty to do the same. I don't want anything gorgeous, you know; just homely neatness. But you must be quick.

Lona. And you must look pleased and happy, Martha; no tears in your eyes.

Bernick. Olaf must come down too. I will have him at my side.

Lona. Hm, Olaf——

Martha. I shall tell Betty.

[*She goes out by the furthest back door to the left.*]

Lona. Well, so the great and solemn hour has come.

Bernick [*goes restlessly up and down*]. Yes, it has come.

Lona. At such a time a man must feel proud and happy, I should think.

Bernick [*looks at her*]. Hm.

Lona. The whole town is to be illuminated, I hear.

Bernick. Yes, I believe there's some such idea.

Lona. All the clubs will turn out with their banners. Your name will shine in letters of fire. To-night it will be

telegraphed to all corners of the country:—"Surrounded by his happy family, Consul Bernick received the homage of his fellow-citizens as one of the pillars of society."

Bernick. So it will; and they will hurrah outside, and the people will call me forward into the doorway there, and I shall have to bow and thank them.

Lona. Have to——?

Bernick. Do you think I feel happy at such a time?

Lona. No, I do not think that you can feel thoroughly happy.

Bernick. Lona, you despise me.

Lona. Not yet.

Bernick. And you have no right to. Not to *despise* me!—Lona, you cannot conceive how unspeakably alone I stand here in this narrow, stunted society—how I have had, year by year, to suppress my longing for a full and satisfying life-work. What have I achieved, after all my manifold labour? Scrap-work—odds and ends. But for other work or greater work there is no room here. If I tried to go a step in advance of the views and ideas which happened to be those of the day, all my power was gone. Do you know what we are, we, who are reckoned the pillars of society? We are the tools of society, neither more nor less.

Lona. Why do you only see this now?

Bernick. Because I have been thinking much lately—since you came home—and most of all this evening. Oh, Lona, why did I not know you to the core, then, in the old days?

Lona. What then?

Bernick. I should never have given you up; and, if I had had you, I should not have stood where I stand now.

Lona. And do you never think what she might have been to you, she, whom you chose in my stead?

Bernick. I know, at any rate, that she has been to me nothing of what I required.

Lona. Because you have never shared your life-work with her; because you have never placed her in a free and true relation to you; because you have allowed her to go on pining under the weight of shame you cast upon those nearest her.

Bernick. Yes, yes, yes; it all comes of the lie and the hollowness.

Lona. Then, why do you not break with all this lying and hollowness?

Bernick. Now? Now it is too late, Lona.

Lona. Karsten, tell me—what satisfaction does this show and deception give you?

Bernick. It gives *me* none. I must sink along with the whole of this bungled social system. But a new generation will grow up after us; it is my son I am working for; it is for him that I am preparing a life-task. There will come a time when truth shall spread through the life of our society, and upon it he shall found a happier life than his father's.

Lona. With a lie for its ground-work? Reflect what it is you are giving your son for an inheritance.

Bernick [*with suppressed despair*]. I am giving him a thousand times worse inheritance than you know of. But, sooner or later, the curse must pass away. And yet—and yet—[*breaking off*]. How could you bring all this upon my head! But it is done now. I must go on now. You *shall* not succeed in crushing me!

[HILMAR TÖNNESEN, *with an open note in his hand, and much discomposed, enters quickly from the right.*]

Hilmar. Why, this is—— Betty, Betty!

Bernick. What now? Are they coming already?

Hilmar. No, no; but I must speak to someone at once.
[*He goes out by the furthest back door on the left.*]

Lona. Karsten, you say we came to crush you. Then let me tell you what stuff he is made of, this prodigal son whom your moral society shrinks from as if he were plague-struck. He has nothing more to do with you, for he has gone away.

Bernick. But he is coming back again———

Lona. Johan will never come back again. He has gone for ever, and Dina has gone with him.

Bernick. Gone for ever? And Dina gone with him?

Lona. Yes, to be his wife. That is how these two strike your virtuous society in the face, as I once—— No matter!

Bernick. Gone!—she too!—in the *Indian Girl?*

Lona. No, he dared not trust such a precious freight to that rotten old tub. Johan and Dina have gone in the *Palm Tree.*

Bernick. Ah! And so—in vain—— [*Rushes to the door of his office, tears it open, and calls in.*] Krap, stop the *Indian Girl;* she musn't sail to-night.

Krap [*inside*]. The *Indian Girl* is already standing out to sea, Consul.

Bernick [*shuts the door, and says feebly*] Too late—and all for nothing.

Lona. What do you mean?

Bernick. Nothing, nothing. Leave me——!

Lona. Hm. Listen, Karsten. Johan told me to tell you that he leaves in my hands the good name he once lent to you, and also that which you stole from him while he was far away Johan will be silent; and I can do or let alone in this matter, as I will. See, I hold in my hand your two letters.

Bernick. You have them! And now—now you will—this very night—perhaps when the procession——

Lona. I did not come here to betray you, but to make you speak out of your own accord. I have failed. Remain standing in the lie. See; I tear your two letters to pieces. Take the pieces; here they are. Now, there is nothing to bear witness against you, Karsten. Now you are safe; be happy too—if you can.

Bernick [*deeply moved*]. Lona, why did you not do this before? It is too late now; my whole life is ruined for me now; I cannot live after to-day.

Lona. What has happened?

Bernick. Do not ask me. And yet I *must* live! I *will* live—for Olaf's sake. He shall restore all and expiate all——

Lona. Karsten——!

[HILMAR TÖNNESEN *enters again rapidly.*]

Hilmar. No one to be found; all away; not even Betty!

Bernick. What is the matter with you?

Hilmar. I dare not tell you.

Bernick. What is it? You must and shall tell me!

Hilmar. Well then, Olaf has run away in the *Indian Girl.*

Bernick [*staggering backwards*]. Olaf—in the *Indian Girl!* No, no!

Lona. Yes, he has! Now I understand; I saw him jump out of the window.

Bernick [*at the door of his room, calls out in despair*]. Krap, stop the *Indian Girl* at any cost!

Krap [*comes in the room*]. Impossible, Consul. How can you think that——

Bernick. We must stop it! Olaf is on board!

Krap. What do you say?

Rummel [*enters from the office*]. Olaf run away? Impossible!

Sandstad [*enters from the office*]. He will be sent back with the pilot, Consul.

Hilmar. No, no; he has written to me [*showing the letter*]; he says he is going to hide among the cargo until they are fairly out to sea.

Bernick. I shall never see him again!

Rummel. Oh, nonsense; a good strong ship, newly repaired——

Vigeland [*who has also come in*]. And in your own yard, too, Consul.

Bernick. I shall never see him again, I tell you. I have lost him; Lona and—I see it now—he has never been really mine. [*Listens.*] What is that?

Rummel. Music. The procession is coming.

Bernick. I cannot, I will not receive anyone.

Rummel. What are you thinking of? It is impossible——

Sandstad. Impossible, Consul; think how much is at stake for yourself.

Bernick. What does it all matter to me now? Whom have I now to work for?

Rummel. Can you ask? You have us and the community.

Vigeland. Yes, that is very true.

Sandstad. And surely, Consul, you do not forget that we——

[MARTHA *enters by the furthest backdoor on the left. Low music is heard far down the street.*]

Martha. Here comes the procession; but Betty is not at home; I can't understand where she——

Bernick. Not at home! There you see, Lona; no support either in joy or sorrow.

Rummel. Up with the blinds. Come and help me, Mr. Krap! You too, Sandstad! What a terrible pity that the family should be disunited just at this moment; quite against the programme.

[*The blinds are drawn up from the door and windows. The whole street is seen to be illuminated. On the house opposite is a large transparency with the inscription,* "Long live Karsten Bernick, the Pillar of our Society!"]

Bernick [*shrinking back*]. Away with all this! I will not look at it! Out with it, out with it!

Rummel. Allow me to ask, are you in your senses?

Martha. What is the matter with him, Lona?

Lona. Hush! [*Whispers to her.*]

Bernick. Away with the mocking words, I say! Do you not see all these lights are gibing at us?

Rummel. Well, I must say——

Bernick. Oh, you know nothing——! But I, I——! All these are the lights in a dead-room!

Krap. Hm!

Rummel. Well, but really, now—you make far too much of it.

Sandstad. The boy will have a trip over the Atlantic, and then you'll have him back again.

Vigeland. Only put your trust in the Almighty, Consul.

Rummel. And in the ship, Bernick; it'll weather the storm safe enough.

Krap. Hm!

Rummel. Why, if it were one of these coffin ships we hear of in the great communities——

Bernick. I can feel my very hair growing grey.

[MRS. BERNICK, *with a large shawl over her head, comes through the garden door.*]

Mrs. Bernick. Karsten, Karsten, do you know——?

Bernick. Yes, I know——; but you—you who can see nothing—you who have no mother's care for him——!

Mrs. Bernick. Oh, listen to me——!

Bernick. Why did you not watch over him? Now I have lost him. Give me him back again, if you can!

Mrs. Bernick. I can, I can; I have got him!

Bernick. You have got him!

The Men. Ah!

Hilmar. Ah, I thought so.

Martha. Now you have him again, Karsten!

Lona. Yes; and now win him as well!

Bernick. You have got him! Is it true what you say? Where is he?

Mrs. Bernick. I shall not tell you until you have forgiven him.

Bernick. Oh, forgiven, forgiven——! But how did you come to know——?

Mrs. Bernick. Do you think a mother does not see? I was in mortal terror for fear you should find it out. A few words he let fall yesterday——; and his room being empty, and his knapsack and clothes gone——

Bernick. Yes, yes——?

Mrs. Bernick. I ran; I got hold of Aune; we went out in his sailing-boat; the American ship was on the point of sailing. Thank Heaven, we arrived in time—we got on board—we looked in the hold—and we found him. Oh, Karsten, you must not punish him!

Bernick. Betty!

Mrs. Bernick. Nor Aune either!

Bernick. Aune? What do you know of him? Is the *Indian Girl* under sail again?

Mrs. Bernick. No, that is just the thing——

Bernick. Speak, speak!

Mrs. Bernick. Aune was as much alarmed as I; the search took some time; the darkness increased, and the pilot made objections; and so Aune ventured—in your name——

Bernick. Well?

Mrs. Bernick. To stop the ship till to-morrow.

Krap. Hm——

Bernick. Oh, what unspeakable happiness!

Mrs. Bernick. You are not angry?

Bernick. Oh, what surpassing happiness, Betty!

Rummel. Why, you're absurdly nervous.

Hilmar. Yes; whenever there's a question of a little struggle with the elements, then—ugh!

Krap [*at the window*]. The procession is coming through the garden gate, Consul.

Bernick. Yes, now let them come!

Rummel. The whole garden is full of people.

Sandstad. The very street is full.

Rummel. The whole town has turned out, Bernick. This is really an inspiring moment.

Vigeland. Let us take it in a humble spirit, Rummel.

Rummel. All the banners are out. What a procession! Ah, here is the committee, with Rector Rörlund at its head.

Bernick. Let them come, I say!

Rummel. But listen; in your excited state of mind——

Bernick. What, then?

Rummel. Why, I should not mind speaking for you.

Bernick. No, thank you; to-night I shall speak myself.

Rummel. Do you know, then, what you have got to say?

Bernick. Yes, don't be alarmed, Rummel—now I know what I have to say.

[*The music has meanwhile ceased. The garden door is thrown open.* RECTOR RÖRLUND *enters at the head of the Committee, accompanied by two porters, carrying a covered basket. After them come townspeople of all classes, as many as the room will hold. An immense crowd, with banners and flags, can be seen out in the garden, and in the street.*]

Rörlund. Consul Bernick! I see from the surprise depicted in your countenance, that it is as unexpected guests that we force ourselves upon you in your happy family-circle, at your peaceful hearth, surrounded by upright and public-spirited friends and fellow-citizens. But it is in obedience to a heartfelt impulse that we bring you our homage It is not the first time we have done so, but it is the first time we have greeted you thus publicly and unanimously. We have often expressed to you our gratitude for the broad moral foundation upon which you have, so to speak, built up our society. This time we chiefly hail in you the clear-sighted, indefatigable, unselfish, nay, self-sacrificing citizen, who has taken the initiative in an undertaking which, we are credibly assured, will give a powerful impetus to the temporal prosperity and well-being of the community.

Voices [*among the crowd*]. Bravo, bravo!

Rörlund. Consul Bernick, you have for many years stood before our town as a shining example. I do not speak of your exemplary domestic life, nor of your spotless moral record. Such things should be left to the closet, not proclaimed from the housetops! But I speak of your activity as a citizen, as it lies open to the eyes of all. Well-appointed ships sail from your wharves, and show our flag in the most distant seas. A numerous and happy body of workmen looks up to you as to a father. By calling into existence new branches of industry, you have laid a foundation for the welfare of hundreds of families. In

other words—you are in an eminent sense the pillar and corner-stone of this community

Voices. Hear, hear! Bravo!

Rörlund. And it is just this light of disinterestedness shining over all your actions that is so unspeakably beneficent, especially in these times. You are now on the point of procuring for us—I do not hesitate to say the word plainly and prosaically—a railway.

Many Voices. Bravo! bravo!

Rörlund. But it seems as though this undertaking were destined to meet with difficulties, principally arising from narrow and selfish interests.

Voices. Hear, hear! Hear, hear!

Rörlund. It is now no longer unknown that certain individuals, not belonging to our community, have been beforehand with the energetic citizens of this place, and have obtained possession of certain advantages, which should by rights have fallen to the share of our own town.

Voices. Yes, yes! Hear, hear!

Rörlund. This deplorable fact has, of course, come to your knowledge as well, Consul Bernick. But, nevertheless, you continue steadily to pursue your undertaking, well knowing that a patriotic citizen must not be exclusively concerned with the interests of his own parish.

Different Voices. Hm! No, no! Yes, yes!

Rörlund. We have assembled, then, this evening, to do homage, in your person, to the ideal citizen—the model of all the civic virtues. May your undertaking contribute to the true and lasting welfare of this community! The railway is, no doubt, an institution which lays us open to the importation of elements of evil from without, but it is also an institution that helps us to get quickly rid of them. From elements of evil from without we cannot even now keep

ourselves quite free. But that we have just on this festal evening, as I hear, happily and more quickly than was expected, got rid of certain elements of this nature——

Voices. Hush, hush!

Rörlund. This I accept as a good omen for the undertaking. That I touch upon this point here shows that we know ourselves to be in a house where family ties are subordinated to the ethical ideal.

Voices. Hear, hear! Bravo!

Bernick [*at the same time*]. Permit me——

Rörlund. Only a few words more, Consul Bernick. What you have done for this community has certainly not been done in the expectation of any tangible reward. But you cannot reject a slight token of your grateful fellow-citizens' appreciation, least of all on this momentous occasion, when, according to the assurances of practical men, we are standing on the threshold of a new time.

Many Voices. Bravo! Hear, hear! Hear, hear!

[*He gives the porters a sign; they bring forward the basket; members of the Committee take out and present, during the following speech, the articles mentioned.*]

Rörlund. Therefore, I have now, Consul Bernick, to hand you a silver coffee service. Let it grace your board when we in future, as so often in the past, have the pleasure of meeting under this hospitable roof. And you, too, gentlemen, who have so actively co-operated with the first man of our community, we would beg to accept a little remembrance. This silver goblet is for you, Mr. Rummel. You have many a time, amid the ring of wine-cups, done battle in eloquent words for the civic interests of this community; may you often find worthy opportunities to lift and drain this goblet. To you, Mr. Sandstad, I hand this album, with

photographs of your fellow-citizens. Your well-known and much-appreciated philanthropy has placed you in the happy position of counting among your friends members of all parties in the community. And to you, Mr. Vigeland, I have to offer, for the decoration of your domestic sanctum, this book of family devotion, on vellum, and luxuriously bound. Under the ripening influence of years, you have attained to an earnest view of life; your activity in the daily affairs of this world has for a long series of years been purified and ennobled by thoughts of things higher and holier. [*Turns towards the crowd.*] And now, my friends, long live Consul Bernick and his fellow-workers! Hurrah for the Pillars of Society!

The whole crowd. Long live Consul Bernick! Long live the Pillars of Society! Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

Lona. I congratulate you, brother-in-law!

[*An expectant silence intervenes.*]

Bernick [*begins earnestly and slowly*]. My fellow-citizens, your spokesman has said that we stand this evening on the threshold of a new time; and there, I hope, he was right. But in order that it may be so, we must bring home to ourselves the truth—the truth which has, until this evening, been utterly and in all things banished from our community. [*Astonishment among the audience.*] I must begin by rejecting the panegyric with which you, Rector Rörlund, according to use and wont on such occasions, have overwhelmed me. I do not deserve it; for until to-day I have not been disinterested in my dealings. If I have not always striven for pecuniary profit, at least I am now conscious that a longing desire for power, influence, and respect has been the motive of most of my actions.

Rummel [*half aloud*]. What next?

Bernick. Before my fellow-citizens I do not reproach myself for this; for I still believe that I may place myself in the first rank among men of practical usefulness.

Many Voices. Yes, yes, yes!

Bernick. But what I do blame myself for is my weakness in condescending to subterfuges, because I knew and feared the tendency of our society to suspect impure motives behind everything a man undertakes. And now I come to a case in point.

Rummel [*anxiously*]. Hm—hm!

Bernick. There are rumours abroad of great sales of property along the projected line. This property I have bought—all of it—I, alone.

Suppressed Voices. What does he say? The Consul? Consul Bernick?

Bernick. It is for the present in my hands. Of course, I have confided in my fellow-workers, Messrs. Rummel, Vigeland, and Sandstad, and we have agreed to——

Rummel. It is not true! Prove!—prove——!

Vigeland. We have not agreed to anything!

Sandstad. Well, I must say——

Bernick. Quite right; we have not yet agreed on what I was about to mention. But I am quite sure that these three gentlemen will acquiesce when I say that I have this evening determined to form a joint-stock company for the exploitation of these lands; whoever will can have shares in it.

Many Voices. Hurrah! Long live Consul Bernick!

Rummel [*aside to Bernick*]. Such mean treachery!

Sandstad [*likewise*]. Then you have been fooling us——!

Vigeland. Why then, devil take——! Oh, Lord, what am I saying?

The Crowd [*outside*]. Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!

Bernick. Silence, gentlemen. I have no right to this homage; for what I have now determined was not my first intention. My intention was to retain the whole myself; and I am still of opinion that the property can be most profitably worked, if it remains in the control of one man. But it is for you to choose. If you wish it, I am willing to manage it for you to the best of my ability.

Voices. Yes, yes, yes!

Bernick. But, first, my fellow-citizens must know me to the core. Then let everyone examine himself, and let us realise the prediction, that from this evening we begin a new time. The old, with its tinsel, its hypocrisy, its hollowness, its lying propriety, and its pitiful cowardice, shall lie behind us like a museum, open for instruction; and to this museum we shall present—shall we not, gentlemen?—the coffee-service, and the goblet, and the album, and the family devotions on vellum and luxuriously bound.

Rummel. Yes, of course.

Vigeland [*mutters*]. If you have taken all the rest, why——

Sandstad. As you please.

Bernick. And now to make my settlement with society. It has been said that elements of evil have left us this evening. I can add what you do not know; the man thus alluded to did not go alone; with him went, to become his wife——

Lona [*loudly*]. Dina Dorf!

Rörlund. What?

Mrs. Bernick. What do you say?

[*There is great excitement.*]

Rörlund. Fled? Run away—with him! Impossible!

Bernick. To become his wife, Rector Rörlund. And I

have more to add. [*Aside.*] Betty, collect yourself, to bear what is coming. [*Aloud.*] I say, let us bow before that man, for he has nobly taken another's sin upon himself. My fellow-citizens, I will come out of the lie; it had almost poisoned every fibre in my being. You shall know all. Fifteen years ago *I* was the guilty one.

Mrs. Bernick [*in a low and trembling voice*]. Karsten!

Martha [*likewise*]. Oh, Johan——!

Lona. Now at last you have found yourself again.

[*Voiceless astonishment among the audience.*]

Bernick. Yes, my fellow-citizens, I was the guilty one, and he fled. The false and vile rumours which were afterwards spread abroad it is now in no human power to disprove. But I cannot complain of this. Fifteen years ago I swung myself aloft upon these rumours; whether I am now to fall with them is for you to decide.

Rörlund. What a thunderbolt! The first man in the town! [*Aside to Mrs. Bernick.*] Oh, how I pity you, Mrs. Bernick!

Hilmar. Such a confession! Well, I must say——

Bernick. But do not decide this evening. I ask everyone to go home—to collect himself—to look into himself. When your minds are calm again, it will be seen whether I have lost or won by speaking out. Good-night! I have still much, very much, to repent of, but that concerns only my own conscience. Good-night! Away with all this show! We all feel that it is out of place here.

Rörlund. Certainly it is. [*Aside to Mrs. Bernick.*] Run away! Then she was unworthy of me after all. [*Half aloud, to the Committee.*] Yes, gentlemen, after this I think we had better go away quietly.

Hilmar. How, after this, one is to hold high the banner of the ideal, I for one—Ugh!

[*The announcement has meanwhile been whispered from mouth to mouth. All the members of the procession retire through the garden.* RUMMEL, SANDSTAD, *and* VIGELAND *go off disputing earnestly but softly.* CONSUL BERNICK, MRS. BERNICK, MARTHA, LONA, *and* KRAP *alone remain in the room. There is a short silence.*]

Bernick. Betty, can you forgive me?

Mrs. Bernick [*looks smilingly at him*]. Do you know, Karsten, that you have opened to me the brightest hope I have had for many years.

Bernick. How?

Mrs. Bernick. For many years I have believed that you had once been mine, and I had lost you again. Now I know that you never were mine; but I shall win you.

Bernick [*embracing her*]. Oh, Betty, you *have* won me. Through Lona I have at last learned to know you aright. But now let Olaf come.

Mrs. Bernick. Yes, now you shall have him. Mr. Krap——!

[*She whispers to him in the background. He goes out by the garden door. During the following all the transparencies and lights in the houses are put out one by one.*]

Bernick [*softly*]. Thanks, Lona; you have saved what is best in me—and for me.

Lona. What else did I intend?

Bernick. Yes, what—what did you intend? I cannot fathom you.

Lona. Hm——

Bernick. Then it was not hatred? Not revenge? Why did you come over?

Lona. Old friendship does not rust.

Bernick. Lona!

Lona. When Johan told me all that about the lie, I swore to myself: The hero of my youth shall stand free and true.

Bernick. Oh, how little have I, pitiful creature, deserved this of you!

Lona. Yes, if we women always asked for deserts, Karsten——!

[AUNE *and* OLAF *enter from the garden.*]

Bernick [*rushing to him*]. Olaf!

Olaf. Father, I promise never to do it again.

Bernick. To run away?

Olaf. Yes, yes, I promise, father.

Bernick. And I promise that you shall never have reason to. Henceforth you shall be allowed to grow up, not as the heir of my life-work, but as one who has a life-work of his own to come.

Olaf. And shall I be allowed to be what I like?

Bernick. Whatever you like.

Olaf. Thank you, father. Then I shall not be a pillar of society.

Bernick. Oh? Why not?

Olaf. Oh, I think it must be so tiresome.

Bernick. You shall be yourself, Olaf; and the rest may go as it will. And you, Aune——

Aune. I know it, Consul; I am dismissed.

Bernick. We will remain together, Aune; and forgive me——

Aune. What? The ship does not sail to-night?

Bernick. Nor yet to-morrow. I gave you too short time. It must be looked to more thoroughly.

Aune. It shall be, Consul, and with the new machines!

Bernick. So be it—but thoroughly and uprightly. There are many among us that need thorough and upright repairs. So good-night, Aune.

Aune. Good-night, Consul; and thanks, thanks, thanks. [*He goes out to the right.*]

Mrs. Bernick. Now they are all gone.

Bernick. And we are alone. My name no longer shines in the transparencies; all the lights are put out in the windows.

Lona. Would you have them lighted again?

Bernick. Not for all the world. Where have I been? You will be horrified when you know. Now, I feel as if I had just recovered my senses after being poisoned. But I feel—I feel that I *can* be young and strong again. Oh, come nearer—closer around me. Come, Betty! Come, Olaf! Come, Martha! Oh, Martha, it seems as though I had never seen you in all these years.

Lona. No, I daresay not; your society is a society of bachelor-souls; you have no eyes for Woman.

Bernick. True, true; and, therefore, of course, it is agreed, Lona—you will never leave Betty and me?

Mrs. Bernick. No, Lona; you must not!

Lona. No; how could I think of going away and leaving you young people, just beginning life? Am I not your foster-mother? You and I, Martha, we are the two old aunts. What are you looking at?

Martha. How the sky is clearing; how it grows light over the sea. The *Palm Tree* has fortune with it——

Lona. And happiness on board.

Bernick. And we—we have a long, earnest day of work before us; I most of all. But let it come; gather close around me, you true and faithful women. I have learned this, in these days: it is you women who are the pillars of society.

Lona. Then you have learned a poor wisdom, brother-in-law. [*Lays her hand firmly upon his shoulder.*] No, no; the spirits of Truth and of Freedom—these are the Pillars of Society.

GHOSTS.*

A FAMILY-DRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

* The Norwegian title, *Gengangere*, is not exactly represented by our word *Ghosts*. It means literally "Again-goers," spirits that "walk." The French word, "Revenants," comes nearer the sense.

CHARACTERS.

MRS. ALVING (HELEN), *widow of Captain Alving, late Chamberlain* to the King.*
OSWALD ALVING, *her son, a painter.*
PASTOR MANDERS.
JOHN ENGSTRAND, *a carpenter.*
REGINA ENGSTRAND, *Mrs. Alving's maid.*

The action takes place at Mrs. Alving's country-house, beside one of the large fiords, in Western Norway.

* Chamberlain (Kammerherre) is the only title of honour now existing in Norway, where titular nobility was abolished in 1814. It is a distinction conferred by the King on men of wealth and position, and is, of course, not hereditary.

GHOSTS.

ACT I.

A spacious garden-room, with one door to the left, and two doors to the right. In the middle of the room a round table, with chairs around it. On the table lie books, periodicals, and newspapers. In the foreground to the left a window, and by it a small sofa, with a work-table in front of it. In the background, the room is continued into a somewhat narrower conservatory, which is shut in by glass walls with large panes. In the right-hand wall of the conservatory is a door leading down into the garden. Through the glass wall one catches a glimpse of a gloomy fiord-landscape, veiled by steady rain.

ENGSTRAND, *the carpenter, stands by the garden door. His left leg is rather crooked; he has a clump of wood under the sole of his boot.* REGINA, *with an empty garden syringe in her hand, hinders him from advancing.*

Regina [*in a low voice*]. What do you want? Stop where you are. You are positively dripping.

Engstrand. It is the Lord's own rain, my girl.

Regina. It is the devil's rain, *I* say.

Engstrand. Lord! how you talk, Regina. [*Limps a few steps forward into the room.*] What I wanted to say was this——

Regina. Don't clatter so with that foot of yours, I tell you! The young master is asleep upstairs.

Engstrand. Asleep? In the middle of the day?

Regina. It's no business of yours.

Engstrand. I was out on the loose last night——

Regina. I can quite believe that.

Engstrand. Yes, we're weak vessels, we poor mortals, my girl——

Regina. So it seems.

Engstrand. ——and temptations are manifold in this world, you see; but all the same, I was hard at work, God knows, at half-past five this morning.

Regina. Very well; only be off now; I won't stop here and have *rendezvous's* with you.

Engstrand. What is it you won't have?

Regina. I won't have anyone find you here; so just you go about your business.

Engstrand [*advances a step or two*]. Blest if I go before I've had a talk with you. This afternoon I shall have finished my work down at the school-house, and then I shall take to-night's boat and be off home to the town.

Regina [*mutters*]. A pleasant journey to you.

Engstrand. Thank you, my child. To-morrow the Asylum is to be opened, and then there'll be fine doings, no doubt, and plenty of intoxicating drink going, you know. And nobody shall say of Jacob Engstrand that he can't keep out of temptation's way.

Regina. Oh!

Engstrand. You see, there are to be any amount of swells here to-morrow. Pastor Manders is expected from town, too.

Regina. He is coming to-day.

Engstrand. There! you see. And I should be cursedly

sorry if he found out anything to my disadvantage, don't you understand?

Regina. Oh! is that your game?

Engstrand. Is what my game?

Regina [*looking hard at him*]. What trick are you going to play on Pastor Manders?

Engstrand. Hush! hush! Are you crazy? Do *I* want to play any trick on Pastor Manders? Oh no! Pastor Manders has been far too kind to me for that. But that's what I wanted to say to you, you know—that I mean to set off home again to-night.

Regina. The sooner the better, for my part.

Engstrand. Yes. But I want to take you with me, Regina.

Regina [*open-mouthed*]. You want me——? What are you talking about?

Engstrand. I want to take you home, I say.

Regina [*scornfully*]. Never in this world shall you get me home with you.

Engstrand. We shall see about that.

Regina. Yes, you may be sure we shall see about it! I who have been brought up by a lady like Mrs. Alving! I, who am treated almost as a daughter here! Is it me you want to go home with you?—to a house like yours? For shame!

Engstrand. What the devil do you mean? Do you set yourself up against your father, girl?

Regina [*mutters without looking at him*]. You have said often enough that I was no child of yours.

Engstrand. Stuff! Why should you trouble about that?

Regina. Haven't you many a time sworn at me and called me a——? *Fi donc!*

Engstrand. Curse me, now, if I ever used such an ugly word.

Regina. Oh! I know quite well what word you used.

Engstrand. Well, but that was only when I was a bit on, don't you know? Hm! Temptations are manifold in this world, Regina.

Regina. Ugh!

Engstrand. And that was when your mother rode her high horse, I had to hit upon something to twit her with. She was always setting up for a fine lady. [*Mimics.*] "Let me go, Engstrand; let me be. Remember I've been three years in Chamberlain Alving's family at Rosenvold." [*Laughs.*] Mercy on us! She never could forget that the Captain was made a Chamberlain while she was in service here.

Regina. Poor mother! you very soon worried her into her grave.

Engstrand [*turns on his heel*]. Oh, of course. I am to be blamed for everything.

Regina [*turns away; half aloud*]. Ugh! and that leg too!

Engstrand. What do you say, girl?

Regina. Pied de mouton.

Engstrand. Is that English, eh?

Regina. Yes.

Engstrand. Oh, ah; you've picked up some learning out here; and that may come in useful now, Regina.

Regina [*after a short silence*]. What do you want with me in town?

Engstrand. Can you ask what a father wants with his only child? Am I not a lonely and forsaken widower?

Regina. Oh! don't try on any nonsense like that! Why do you want me?

Engstrand. Well, let me tell you, I've been thinking of starting a new line of business.

Regina [*contemptuously*]. You've tried that often enough, and never done any good.

Engstrand. Yes, but this time you shall see, Regina! Devil take me——

Regina [*stamps*]. Don't swear!

Engstrand. Hush, hush; you're right enough there, my girl. What I wanted to say was just this—I've laid by a very tidy pile from this Orphanage job.

Regina. Have you? That's a good thing for you.

Engstrand. What can a man spend his ha'pence on here in the country?

Regina. Well, what then?

Engstrand. Why, you see, I thought of putting the money into some paying speculation. I thought of a sort of sailors' tavern——

Regina. Horrid!

Engstrand. A regular high-class affair, of course; not a mere pigstye for common sailors. No! damn it! it would be for captains and mates, and—and—all these swells, you know.

Regina. And I was to——?

Engstrand. You were to help, to be sure. Only for appearance sake, you understand. Devil a bit of hard work shall you have, my girl. You shall do exactly what you like.

Regina. Oh, indeed!

Engstrand. But there must be a petticoat in the house. That's as clear as daylight. For I want to have it a little lively in the evenings, with singing and dancing, and so forth. You must remember they are weary wanderers on the ocean of life [*nearer*]. Now don't be stupid and stand in your own light, Regina. What can become of you out here? What good is it to you that your mistress has given

you a lot of learning? You're to look after the children at the new Orphanage, I hear. Is that the sort of thing for you, eh? Are you so desperately bent upon wearing yourself out for the sake of the dirty brats?

Regina. No; if things go as I want them to, then—well, there's no saying—there's no saying.

Engstrand. What do you mean by "there's no saying?"

Regina. Never you mind. Is it a great deal of money you've saved up here?

Engstrand. What with one thing and another, a matter of seven or eight hundred crowns.*

Regina. That's not so bad.

Engstrand. It's enough to make a start with, my girl.

Regina. Aren't you thinking of giving me any of that money?

Engstrand. No, I'm damned if I am!

Regina. Aren't you thinking of sending me so much as a scrap of stuff for a new dress?

Engstrand. If you'll come to town with me, you can get dresses enough.

Regina. Pooh! I can do that on my own account if I want to.

Engstrand. No, a father's guiding hand is what you want, Regina. Now, I can have a capital little house in Little Harbour Street. I won't need much ready-money, and it could be a sort of sailors' home, you know.

Regina. But I will *not* live with you. I have nothing whatever to do with you. Be off!

Engstrand. You wouldn't remain long with me, my girl. No such luck! If you knew how to play your cards, such a fine girl as you've grown in the last year or two——

Regina. Well?

*A "krone" is equal to about one shilling and three-halfpence.

Engstrand. It wouldn't be long before some mate came in your way, or it might even be a captain——

Regina. I won't marry anyone of that sort. Sailors have no *savoir vivre.*

Engstrand. What haven't they got?

Regina. I know what sailors are, I tell you. They are not the sort of people to marry.

Engstrand. Then never mind about marrying them. You can make it pay all the same. [*More confidentially.*] He—the Englishman—the man with the yacht—he gave three hundred dollars, he did; and she was not a bit handsomer than you are.

Regina [*going towards him*]. Out you go!

Engstrand [*falling back*]. Come, come! You're not going to strike me, I hope.

Regina. Yes, if you begin to talk about mother I shall strike you. Get away with you, I say [*drives him back towards the garden door*]. And don't bang the doors. Young Mr. Alving——

Engstrand. He's asleep. Yes, I know. It's curious how you're taken up about young Mr. Alving—[*more softly*] Oho! it surely can't be he that——?

Regina. Be off, and quickly! you're crazy, I tell you! No, don't go that way. There comes Pastor Manders. Down the kitchen stairs with you.

Engstrand [*towards the right*]. Yes, yes, I'm going. But just you talk to him that's coming there. He's the man to tell you what a child owes to its father. For I am your father all the same, you know. I can prove it from the church-register.

[*He goes out through the second door to the right, which* REGINA *has opened, and fastens again after him*].

[REGINA *glances hastily at herself in the mirror, dusts herself with her pocket handkerchief, and settles her collar; then she busies herself with the flowers.*]

Manders [*in an overcoat, with an umbrella, and with a small travelling bag on a strap over his shoulder, comes through the garden door into the conservatory*]. Good morning, Miss Engstrand.

Regina [*turning round, surprised and pleased*]. No, really! Good morning, Pastor Manders. Is the steamer in already?

Manders. It's just in [*enters the sitting-room*]. Terrible weather we've been having lately.

Regina [*follows him*]. It's such blessed weather for the country, sir.

Manders. Yes, you're quite right. We townspeople think too little about that. [*He begins to take off his overcoat.*]

Regina. Oh! mayn't I help you? There! Why! how wet it is! I'll just hang it up in the hall. And your umbrella, too. I'll open it so as to let it dry.

[*She goes out with the things through the second door on the right.* MR. MANDERS *takes his travelling bag off and lays it and his hat on a chair. Meanwhile* REGINA *comes in again.*]

Manders. Ah! it's a comfort to get safe under cover. Well, is all going on well here?

Regina. Yes, thank you, sir.

Manders. You have your hands full, I suppose, in preparation for to-morrow?

Regina. Yes, there's plenty to do, of course.

Manders. And Mrs. Alving is at home, I trust?

Regina. Oh, dear yes. She's just upstairs looking after the young master's chocolate.

Manders. Yes, by-the-bye—I heard down at the pier that Oswald had arrived.

Regina. Yes, he came the day before yesterday. We didn't expect him before to-day.

Manders. Quite strong and well, I hope?

Regina. Yes, thank you, quite; but dreadfully tired with the journey. He has made one rush all the way from Paris. I mean he came the whole way in one train. I believe he is sleeping a little now; so perhaps we'd better talk a little quietly.

Manders. Hush!—as quietly as you please.

Regina [*arranging an arm-chair beside the table*]. Now, do sit down, Pastor Manders, and make yourself comfortable. [*He sits down; she puts a footstool under his feet.*] There! are you comfortable now, sir?

Manders. Thanks, thanks, I am most comfortable. [*Looks at her*]. Do you know, Miss Engstrand, I positively think you have grown since I last saw you.

Regina. Do you think so, sir? Mrs. Alving says my figure has developed too.

Manders. Developed? Well, perhaps a little; just enough [*short pause*].

Regina. Shall I tell Mrs. Alving you are here?

Manders. Thanks, thanks, there's no hurry, my dear child. By-the-bye, Regina, my good girl, just tell me, how is your father getting on out here?

Regina. Oh, thank you, he is getting on well enough.

Manders. He called upon me last time he was in town.

Regina. Did he, indeed? He's always so glad of a chance of talking to you, sir.

Manders. And you often look in upon him at his work, I daresay?

Regina. I? Oh, of course, when I have time, I——

Manders. Your father is not a man of strong character, Miss Engstrand. He stands terribly in need of a guiding hand.

Regina. Oh, yes; I daresay he does.

Manders. He needs to have someone near him whom he cares for, and whose judgment he respects. He frankly admitted that when he last came to see me.

Regina. Yes, he has said something of the sort to me. But I don't know whether Mrs. Alving can spare me; especially now, when we have got the new Orphanage to manage. And then I should be so sorry to leave Mrs. Alving; she has always been so kind to me.

Manders. But a daughter's duty, my good girl——. Of course we must first get your mistress's consent.

Regina. But I don't know whether it would be quite proper for me, at my age, to keep house for a single man.

Manders. What! my dear Miss Engstrand! When the man is your own father!

Regina. Yes, that may be, but all the same——. Now if it were in a thoroughly respectable house, and with a real gentleman——

Manders. But, my dear Regina——

Regina. ——one I could really love and respect, and be a daughter to——

Manders. Yes, but my dear, good child——

Regina. Then I should be glad to go to town. It's very lonely out here; and you know yourself, sir, what it is to be alone in the world. And so much I can say for myself, I am both quick and willing. Don't you know of any such place for me, sir?

Manders. I? No, certainly not.

Regina. But, dear, dear sir, do remember me if——

Manders [*rising*]. Yes, yes, certainly, Miss Engstrand.

Regina. For if I——

Manders. Will you be so good as to fetch your mistress?

Regina. I will, at once, sir. [*She goes out to the left.*]

Manders [*goes two or three times up and down the room, stands a moment in the background with his hands behind his back, and looks out over the garden. Then he returns to the table, takes up a book, and looks at the title-page; starts and looks at several*]. Hm—indeed!

[MRS. ALVING *enters by the door on the left; she is followed by* REGINA, *who immediately goes out through the first door on the right.*]

Mrs. Alving [*holds out her hand*]. Welcome, my dear Pastor.

Manders. How do you do, Mrs. Alving? Here I am as I promised.

Mrs. Alving. Always punctual to the minute.

Manders. You may believe it wasn't so easy for me to get away. What with all the Boards and Committees I belong to——

Mrs. Alving. That makes it all the kinder of you to come so early. Now we can get through our business before dinner. But where is your luggage?

Manders [*quickly*]. I left it down at the inn. I shall sleep there to-night.

Mrs. Alving [*suppressing a smile*]. Are you really not to be persuaded, even now, to pass the night under my roof?

Manders. No, no, Mrs. Alving; many thanks. I shall stay down there as usual. It is so convenient for starting again.

Mrs. Alving. Well, you must have your own way. But I really should have thought that we two old people——

Manders. Now, you're making fun of me. Ah! to be

sure! this is a joyful day for you. You have got to-morrow's festival to look forward to, and then you have got Oswald home again.

Mrs. Alving. Yes; you can think what a delight it is to me! It is more than two years since he was last home. And now he has promised to stay with me all winter.

Manders. Has he really? That's very nice and dutiful of him. For I can well believe that life in Rome and Paris has far more attractions.

Mrs. Alving. True. But here he has his mother, you see. My own darling boy, he hasn't forgotten his love for his mother!

Manders. It would be grievous indeed, if absence and working at art and that sort of thing were to blunt his natural feeling.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, you may well say so. But there is nothing of that sort to fear in him. I am quite curious to see if you would know him again. He will be down presently; he's upstairs just now, resting a little on the sofa. But do sit down, my dear Pastor.

Manders. Thank you. Then it's quite convenient for you?

Mrs. Alving. Certainly. [*She sits by the table.*]

Manders. Very well. Then you shall see . . . [*he goes to the chair where his travelling bag lies, takes out a packet of papers, sits down on the opposite side of the table, and tries to find a clear space for the papers*]. Now, to begin with, here is . . . [*breaking off*]—Tell me, Mrs. Alving, how do these books come here?

Mrs. Alving. These books? They are books I am reading.

Manders. Do you read this sort of literature?

Mrs. Alving. Certainly I do.

Manders. Do you feel yourself better or happier for reading of this kind?

Mrs. Alving. I feel myself, so to speak, more secure.

Manders. That's strange. How do you mean?

Mrs. Alving. Well, I seem to find explanation and confirmation of all sorts of things I myself have been thinking. For that is the wonderful part of it, Pastor Manders; there is really nothing new in these books, nothing but what most people think and believe. Only most people either do not formulate it to themselves, or else keep quiet about it.

Manders. Great heavens! Do you really believe that most people——?

Mrs. Alving. I do, indeed.

Manders. But surely not in this country? Not here with us?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, certainly, with us, too.

Manders. Well, I really must say——

Mrs. Alving. For the rest, what do you object to in these books?

Manders. Object to in them? You surely don't suppose that I have nothing to do but study such productions as these?

Mrs Alving. That is to say, you know nothing of what you are condemning.

Manders. I have read enough *about* these writings to disapprove of them.

Mrs. Alving. Yes; but your own opinion——

Manders. My dear Mrs. Alving, there are many occasions in life where one must rely upon others. It is so in this world; and it is a good thing. How could society get on otherwise?

Mrs. Alving. Well, I daresay you are right there.

Manders. Besides, I of course don't deny that there may

be much that is interesting in such books. Nor can I blame you for wishing to keep up with the intellectual movements which are said to be going on in the great world, where you have let your son pass so much of his life. But——

Mrs. Alving. But?

Manders [*lowering his voice*]. But one shouldn't talk about it, Mrs. Alving. One is certainly not bound to account to everybody for what one reads and thinks within one's own four walls.

Mrs. Alving. Of course not; I quite think so.

Manders. Only think, now, how you are bound to consider the interests of this Orphanage which you decided on founding at a time when your opinions on spiritual matters were very different from what they are now—so far as I can judge.

Mrs. Alving. Oh, yes; I quite admit that. But it was about the Orphanage. . . .

Manders. It was about the Orphanage we were to speak; yes. All I say is: prudence, my dear lady! And now we'll get to business. [*Opens the packet, and takes out a number of papers.*] Do you see these?

Mrs. Alving. The documents?

Manders. All—and in perfect order. I can tell you it was hard work to get them in time. I had to put on strong pressure. The authorities are almost painfully scrupulous when you want them to come to the point. But here they are at last. [*Looks through the bundle.*] See! here is the formal deed of gift of the parcel of ground known as Solvik in the Manor of Rosenvold, with all the newly constructed buildings, school-rooms, master's house, and chapel. And here is the legal fiat for the endowment and for the Regulations of the Institution. Will you look at them?

[*Reads.*] "Regulations for the Children's Home to be known as 'Captain Alving's Foundation.'"

Mrs. Alving [*looks long at the paper*]. So there it is.

Manders. I have chosen the name "Captain" rather than "Chamberlain." "Captain" looks less pretentious.

Mrs. Alving. Oh, yes; just as you think best.

Manders. And here you have the Bank Account of the capital lying at interest to cover the current expenses of the Orphanage.

Mrs. Alving. Thank you; but please keep it—it will be more convenient.

Manders. With pleasure. I think we will leave the money in the Bank for the present. The interest is certainly not what we could wish—four per cent. and six months' notice of withdrawal. If a good mortgage could be found later on—of course it must be a first mortgage and an undoubted security—then we could consider the matter.

Mrs. Alving. Certainly, my dear Pastor Manders. You are the best judge in these things.

Manders. I will keep my eyes open, at any rate. But now there is one thing more which I have several times been intending to ask you.

Mrs. Alving. And what is that?

Manders. Shall the Orphanage buildings be insured or not?

Mrs. Alving. Of course they must be insured.

Manders. Well, stop a minute, Mrs. Alving. Let us look into the matter a little more closely.

Mrs. Alving. I have everything insured; buildings and movables and stock and crops.

Manders. Of course you have—on your own estate. And so have I—of course. But here, you see, it is quite

another matter. The Orphanage is to be consecrated, as it were, to a higher purpose.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, but that's no reason——

Manders. For my own part, I should not see the smallest impropriety in guarding against all contingencies——

Mrs. Alving. No, I should think not.

Manders. But what is the general feeling in the neighbourhood? You, of course, know better than I.

Mrs. Alving. Hm—the general feeling——

Manders. Is there any considerable number of people—really responsible people—who might be scandalised?

Mrs. Alving. What do you mean by "really responsible people?"

Manders. Well, I mean men in such independent and influential positions that one cannot help allowing some weight to their opinions.

Mrs. Alving. There are several people of that sort here, who would very likely be shocked if——

Manders. There, you see! In town we have many such people. Think of all my colleague's adherents! People would be only too ready to interpret our action as a sign that neither you nor I had the right faith in a Higher Providence.

Mrs. Alving. But so far as you are concerned, my dear Pastor, you have, at least, the consciousness that——

Manders. Yes, I know,—I know; my conscience would be quite easy, that is true enough. But nevertheless we should not escape grave misinterpretation; and that might very likely react upon the Orphanage, and restrict its usefulness.

Mrs. Alving. Well, if that were to be the case, then——

Manders. Nor can I lose sight of the difficult, and I may even say painful, position I might perhaps get into. In the

leading circles of the town people are much taken up about this Orphanage. It is, of course, founded partly for the benefit of the town, as well; and it is to be hoped it will, in no inconsiderable degree, result in lightening our Poor Rates. But as I have been your adviser, and have had the business matters in my hands, I cannot but fear that I may be the first person for jealousy to fasten upon——

Mrs. Alving. Oh! you mustn't run the risk of that.

Manders. To say nothing of the attacks that would assuredly be made upon me in certain papers and periodicals, which——

Mrs. Alving. Enough, my dear Pastor Manders. That consideration is quite decisive.

Manders. Then you do not wish the Orphanage insured?

Mrs. Alving. No. We will let it alone.

Manders [*leaning back in his chair*]. But if a misfortune were to happen?—one can never tell. Would you be able to make good the damage?

Mrs. Alving. No; I tell you plainly I should do nothing of the kind.

Manders. Then I must tell you, Mrs. Alving, it is really no small responsibility we are taking upon ourselves.

Mrs. Alving. But do you think we can do anything else?

Manders. No, that is just the thing; we really can do nothing else. We must not expose ourselves to false interpretation; and we have no right whatever to give offence to our neighbours.

Mrs. Alving. You, as a clergyman, certainly should not.

Manders. And I really think, too, we may trust that an institution of this kind has fortune on its side; in fact, that it stands under a Special Providence.

Mrs. Alving. Let us hope so, Pastor Manders.

Manders. Then we will let the matter alone.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, certainly.

Manders. Very well. Just as you think best. [*Makes a note.*] Then—no insurance.

Mrs. Alving. It is rather curious that you should just happen to mention the matter to-day.

Manders. I have often thought of asking you about it——

Mrs. Alving. ——for we very nearly had a fire down there yesterday.

Manders. You don't say so!

Mrs. Alving. Oh, it was of no importance. A heap of shavings had caught fire in the carpenter's workshop.

Manders. Where Engstrand works?

Mrs. Alving. Yes. They say he's often very careless with matches.

Manders. He has so many things in his head, that man—so many temptations. Thank God, he is now striving to lead a decent life, I hear.

Mrs. Alving. Indeed! Who says so?

Manders. He himself assures me of it. And he is certainly a capital workman.

Mrs. Alving. Oh, yes; so long as he is sober.

Manders. Yes, that's a sad weakness. But he is often driven to it by his bad leg, he says. Last time he was in town I was really touched by him. He came to me and thanked me so warmly for having got him work here, so that he might be near Regina.

Mrs. Alving. He doesn't see much of *her*.

Manders. Oh, yes. He has a talk with her every day. He told me so himself.

Mrs. Alving. Well, it may be so.

Manders. He feels so clearly that he needs someone to hold him back when temptation comes. That is what I

can't help liking about Jacob Engstrand; he comes to you helplessly, accusing himself and confessing his own weakness. The last time he was talking to me—Believe me, Mrs. Alving, supposing it were a real necessity for him to have Regina home again——

Mrs. Alving [*rising hastily*]. Regina!

Manders. ——you must not set yourself against it.

Mrs. Alving. Indeed I shall set myself against it. And besides—Regina is to have a position in the Orphanage.

Manders. But, after all, remember he's her father——

Mrs. Alving. Oh! I know best what sort of a father he has been to her. No! she shall never go to him with my goodwill.

Manders [*rising*]. My dear lady, don't take the matter so warmly. You misjudge Engstrand sadly. You seem to be quite terrified——

Mrs. Alving [*more quietly*]. It doesn't matter. I have taken Regina into my house, and there she shall stay. [*Listens.*] Hush, my dear Mr. Manders; don't say any more about it. [*Her face lights up with gladness.*] Listen! there is Oswald coming down the stairs. Now we will think of no one but him.

Oswald Alving [*in a light overcoat, hat in hand, and smoking a large meerschaum, enters through the door on the left; standing in the doorway*]. Oh! I beg your pardon; I thought you were sitting in the office. [*Comes forward.*] Good-morning, Pastor Manders?

Manders [*staring*]. Ah——! How strange——!

Mrs. Alving. Well, now what do you say to this young man, Mr. Manders?

Manders. I say—I say—why! is it really——?

Oswald. Yes, it is really the Prodigal Son, sir.

Manders. My dear young friend——!

Oswald. Well, then, the reclaimed Son.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald is thinking of the time when you were so much opposed to his being a painter.

Manders. To our human eyes many a step seems dubious which afterwards proves——[*wrings his hand.*] Anyhow, welcome, welcome home. Why, my dear Oswald—I suppose I may call you by your Christian name?

Oswald. Yes; what else should you call me?

Manders. Very good. What I wanted to say was this, my dear Oswald—you must not believe that I utterly condemn the artist's calling. I have no doubt there are many who can keep their inner self unharmed in that profession, as in any other.

Oswald. Let us hope so.

Mrs. Alving [*beaming with delight*]. I know one who has kept both his inner and outer self unharmed. Only look at him, Mr. Manders.

Oswald [*moves restlessly about the room*]. Yes, yes, my dear Mother; let's say no more about it.

Manders. Why, certainly—it can't be denied. And you have begun to make a name for yourself already. The newspapers have often spoken of you, and most favourably. By-the-bye, just lately they haven't mentioned you so often, I fancy.

Oswald [*up in the conservatory*]. I have not been able to paint so much lately.

Mrs. Alving. Even a painter needs a little rest now and then.

Manders. I can quite believe it. And, meanwhile, he can be gathering his forces and preparing himself for some great work.

Oswald. Yes.—Mother, will dinner soon be ready?

Mrs. Alving. In less than half-an-hour. He has a capital appetite, thank God.

Manders. And a taste for tobacco, too.

Oswald. I found my father's pipe in my room, and so——

Manders. Aha! then that accounts for it.

Mrs. Alving. For what?

Manders. When Oswald stood there, in the doorway, with the pipe in his mouth, I could have sworn I saw his father, large as life.

Oswald. No, really?

Mrs. Alving. Oh! how can you say so? Oswald takes after me.

Manders. Yes, but there is an expression about the corners of the mouth—something about the lips that reminds one exactly of Alving; at any rate now that he is smoking.

Mrs. Alving. Not in the least. Oswald has rather a clerical curve about his mouth, I think.

Mr. Manders. Yes, yes; some of my colleagues have much the same look.

Mrs. Alving. But put your pipe away, my dear boy; I won't have smoking in here.

Oswald [*does so*]. By all means. I only wanted to try it; for I once smoked it when I was a child.

Mrs. Alving. You?

Oswald. Yes. I was quite small at the time. I recollect I came up to father's room one evening when he was in great spirits.

Mrs. Alving. Oh! you can't recollect anything of these times.

Oswald. Yes. I recollect distinctly. He took me up on his knees, and gave me the pipe. "Smoke, boy," he said; "smoke away, boy." And I smoked as hard as I could, until I felt I was growing quite pale, and the perspiration stood in great drops on my forehead. Then he burst out laughing heartily.

Manders. That was most extraordinary.

Mrs. Alving. My dear friend, it is only something Oswald has dreamt.

Oswald. No, mother, I assure you I haven't dreamt it. For—don't you remember this?—you came and carried me out into the nursery. Then I was sick, and I saw that you were crying. Did father often play such pranks?

Manders. In his youth he had splendid spirits——*

Oswald. And nevertheless he managed to do so much in the world; so much that was good and useful; and he died so young, too.

Manders. Yes, you have indeed inherited the name of an active and worthy man, my dear Oswald Alving. No doubt it will act as a spur to you.

Oswald. It ought to, indeed.

Manders. It was good of you to come home for to-morrow's ceremony in his honour.

Oswald. I could do no less for my father.

Mrs. Alving. And I am to keep him so long! that is the best of all.

Manders. You are going to stop at home through the winter, I hear.

Oswald. My stay is indefinite, sir. But, oh! how delightful it is to be at home again!

Mrs. Alving [*beaming*]. Yes, isn't it?

Manders [*looking sympathetically at him*]. You went out into the world early, my dear Oswald.

Oswald. I did. I sometimes wonder whether it was not too early.

Mrs. Alving. Oh! not at all. A healthy lad is all the

* "Var en særdeles livsglad mand"—literally, "was a man who took the greatest pleasure in life," *la joie de vivre*—an expression which frequently recurs in the play.

better for it; especially when he's an only child. He ought not to hang on at home with mother and father and get spoilt.

Manders. It's a very difficult question, Mrs. Alving. A child's proper place is, and must be, the home of his fathers.

Oswald. There I quite agree with you, Pastor Manders.

Manders. Only look at your own son—there is no reason why we shouldn't say it in his presence—what has the consequence been for him? He is six or seven and twenty, and has never had the opportunity of learning what home life really is.

Oswald. I beg your pardon, Pastor; there you're quite mistaken.

Manders. Indeed? I thought you had lived almost exclusively in artistic circles.

Oswald. So I have.

Manders. And chiefly among the younger artists.

Oswald. Why, certainly.

Manders. But I thought few of these young fellows could afford to set up house and support a family.

Oswald. There are many who can't afford to marry, sir.

Manders. Yes, that's just what I say.

Oswald. But they can have a home for all that. And several of them have, as a matter of fact; and very pleasant, comfortable homes they are, too.

Mrs. Alving [*follows with breathless interest; nods, but says nothing*].

Manders. But I am not talking of bachelors' quarters. By a "home" I understand the home of a family, where a man lives with his wife and children.

Oswald. Yes; or with his children and his children's mother.

Manders [*starts; clasps his hands*]. But good heavens——!

Oswald. Well?

Manders. Lives with—his children's mother!

Oswald. Yes. Would you have him turn his children's mother out of doors?

Manders. Then it is illicit relations you are talking of. Irregular marriages, as people call them!

Oswald. I have never noticed anything particularly irregular about the life these people lead.

Manders. But how is it possible that a—a young man or young woman with any decent principles can endure to live in that way?—in the eyes of all the world!

Oswald. What are they to do? A poor young artist—a poor girl. It costs a lot of money to get married. What are they to do?

Manders. What are they to do? Let me tell you, Mr. Alving, what they ought to do. They ought to exercise self-restraint from the first; that's what they ought to do.

Oswald. Such talk as that won't go far with warm-blooded young people, over head and ears in love.

Mrs. Alving. No, it wouldn't go far.

Manders [*continuing*]. How can the authorities tolerate such things? Allow it to go on in the light of day? [*To Mrs. Alving.*] Had I not cause to be deeply concerned about your son? In circles where open immorality prevails, and has even a sort of prestige——!

Oswald. Let me tell you, sir, that I have been a constant Sunday-guest in one or two such irregular homes——

Manders. On Sunday of all days!

Oswald. Isn't that the day to enjoy oneself? Well, never have I heard an offensive word, and still less have I ever witnessed anything that could be called immoral. No; do you know when and where I have found immorality in artistic circles?

Manders. No! Thank heaven, I don't!

Oswald. Well, then, allow me to inform you. I have met with it when one or other of our pattern husbands and fathers has come to Paris to have a look round on his own account, and has done the artists the honour of visiting them in their humble clubs. *They* knew what was what. These gentlemen could tell us all about places and things we had never dreamt of.

Manders. What! Do you mean to say that respectable men from home here would——?

Oswald. Have you never heard these respectable men, when they got home again, talking about the way in which immorality was getting the upper hand abroad?

Manders. Yes, of course.

Mrs. Alving. I have, too.

Oswald. Well, you may take their word for it. They know what they are talking about! [*Presses his hands to his head.*] Oh! that that great, free, glorious life out there should be defiled in such a way!

Mrs. Alving. You must not get excited, Oswald. You will do yourself harm.

Oswald. Yes; you are quite right, mother. It's not good for me. You see, I'm wretchedly worn out. I'll go for a little turn before dinner. Excuse me, Pastor; I know you can't take my point of view; but I couldn't help speaking out.

[*He goes out through the second door to the right.*]

Mrs. Alving. My poor boy!

Manders. You may well say so. Then that's what it has come to with him!

Mrs. Alving [*looks at him silently*].

Manders [*walking up and down*]. He called himself the Prodigal Son—alas! alas!

Mrs. Alving [*continues looking at him*].

Manders. And what do you say to all this?

Mrs. Alving. I say that Oswald was right in every word.

Manders [*stands still*]. Right! Right! In such principles!

Mrs. Alving. Here, in my loneliness, I have come to the same way of thinking, Pastor Manders. But I have never dared to touch upon the matter. Well! now my boy shall speak for me.

Manders. You are much to be pitied, Mrs. Alving. But now I must speak seriously to you. And now it is no longer your business manager and adviser, your own and your late husband's early friend, who stands before you. It is the priest—the priest who stood before you in the moment of your life when you had gone most astray.

Mrs. Alving. And what has the priest to say to me?

Manders. I will first stir up your memory a little. The time is well-chosen To-morrow will be the tenth anniversary of your husband's death. To-morrow the monument in his honour will be unveiled. To-morrow I shall have to speak to the whole assembled multitude. But to-day I will speak to you alone.

Mrs. Alving. Very well, Pastor Manders. Speak.

Manders. Do you remember that after scarcely a year of married life you stood on the verge of an abyss? That you forsook your house and home? That you fled from your husband? Yes, Mrs. Alving—fled, fled, and refused to return to him, however much he begged and prayed of you?

Mrs. Alving. Have you forgotten how infinitely miserable I was in that first year?

Manders. It is only the spirit of rebellion that craves for happiness in this life. What right have we human beings to happiness? No, we have to do our duty!

And your duty was to hold firmly to the man you had once chosen and to whom you were bound by a holy tie.

Mrs. Alving. You know very well what sort of life Alving was then leading—what excesses he was guilty of.

Manders. I know very well what rumours there were about him, and I least of all approve the life he led in his young days, if report did not wrong him. But a wife is not to be her husband's judge. It was your duty to bear with humility the cross which a Higher Power had, for your own good, laid upon you. But instead of that you rebelliously cast away the cross, desert the backslider whom you should have supported, go and risk your good name and reputation, and—nearly succeed in ruining other people's reputation into the bargain.

Mrs. Alving. Other people's? One other person's, you mean.

Manders. It was unspeakably reckless of you to seek refuge with me.

Mrs. Alving. With our clergyman? With our intimate friend?

Manders. Just on that account. Yes, you may thank God that I possessed the necessary firmness; that I dissuaded you from your wild designs, and that it was vouchsafed me to lead you back to the path of duty, and home to your lawful husband.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, Pastor Manders, it was certainly your work.

Manders. I was but a poor instrument in a Higher Hand. And what a blessing has it not been to you all the days of your life that I got you to resume the yoke of duty and obedience! Did it not all happen as I foretold? Did not Alving turn his back on his errors, as a man should? Did he not live with you from that time, lovingly and blamelessly,

all his days? Did he not become a benefactor to the whole district? And did he not raise you up to him so that you little by little became his assistant in all his undertakings? And a capital assistant, too—Oh! I know, Mrs. Alving, that praise is due to you. But now I come to the next great false step in your life.

Mrs. Alving. What do you mean?

Manders. Just as you once disowned a wife's duty, so you have since disowned a mother's.

Mrs. Alving. Ah!

Manders. You have been all your life under the dominion of a pestilent spirit of self-will. All your efforts have been bent towards emancipation and lawlessness. You have never been willing to endure any bond. Everything that has weighed upon you in life you have cast away without care or conscience, like a burden you could throw off at will. It did not please you to be a wife any longer, and you left your husband. You found it troublesome to be a mother, and you sent your child forth among strangers.

Mrs. Alving. Yes. That is true. I did so.

Manders. And thus you have become a stranger to him.

Mrs. Alving. No! no! I am not.

Manders. Yes, you are; you must be. And how have you got him back again? Bethink yourself well, Mrs. Alving. You have sinned greatly against your husband;—that you recognise by raising yonder memorial to him. Recognise now, also, how you sinned against your son. There may be time to lead him back from the paths of error. Turn back yourself, and restore what may yet be restored in him. For [*with uplifted fore-finger*] verily, Mrs. Alving, you are a guilt-laden mother!—This I have thought it my duty to say to you. [*Silence.*]

Mrs. Alving [*slowly and with self-control*]. You have

now spoken out, Pastor Manders; and to-morrow you are to speak publicly in memory of my husband. I shall not speak to-morrow. But now I will speak out a little to you, as you have spoken to me.

Manders. To be sure. You want to bring forward excuses for your conduct——

Mrs. Alving. No. I will only narrate.

Manders. Well?

Mrs. Alving. All that you have just said about me and my husband and our life together, after you had brought me back to the path of duty—as you called it—these are all matters about which you know nothing from your own observation. From that moment you, who had been our intimate friend, never set foot in our house again.

Manders. You and your husband left the town immediately after.

Mrs. Alving. Yes. And in my husband's life-time you never came to see us. It was business that forced you to visit me when you undertook the affairs of the Orphanage.

Manders [*softly and uncertainly*]. Helen—if that is meant as a reproach, I would beg you to bear in mind——

Mrs. Alving. ——the regard you owed to your position; yes, and that I was a runaway wife. One can never be too reserved with such unprincipled creatures.

Manders. My dear—Mrs. Alving, you know that is an absurd exaggeration——

Mrs. Alving. Well, well, suppose it is. All I wanted to say was, that your judgment as to my married life is founded upon nothing but current gossip.

Manders. Well, perhaps it is. And what then?

Mrs. Alving. Well, then, Mr. Manders—I will tell you the truth. I have sworn to myself that one day you should know it—you alone!

Manders. And what is the truth, then?

Mrs. Alving. The truth is that my husband died just as profligate as he had lived all his days,

Manders [*feeling after a chair*]. What do you say?

Mrs. Alving. After nineteen years of marriage, as profligate—in his desires at any rate—as he was before you married us.

Manders. And those—those wild-oats, those irregularities, those excesses if you like, you call "a profligate life"?

Mrs. Alving. Our doctor used the expression.

Manders. I don't understand you

Mrs. Alving. Nor need you

Manders It almost makes me dizzy. All your married life, the seeming union of all these years, was nothing more than a hidden abyss!

Mrs. Alving. Nothing more. Now you know

Manders. That. . It will take me long to accustom myself to the thought. I can't grasp it. I can't realise it But how was it possible . How could such a state of things be kept dark?

Mrs. Alving. That has been my ceaseless struggle, day after day. After Oswald's birth, I thought Alving seemed to be a little better. But it did not last long. And then I had to struggle twice as hard, fighting for life or death, so that nobody should know what sort of a man my child's father was. And you know what power Alving had of winning people's hearts. Nobody seemed able to believe anything but good of him. He was one of those people whose life does not bite upon their reputation. But at last, Mr. Manders—for you must know the whole story—the most repulsive thing of all happened.

Manders. More repulsive than the rest?

Mrs. Alving. I had gone on bearing with him, although

I knew very well the secrets of his life out of doors. But when he brought the scandal within our own walls——

Manders. Impossible! Here!

Mrs. Alving. Yes; here in our own home. It was in there [*pointing towards the first door on the right*], in the dining-room, that I first got to know of it. I was busy with something in there, and the door was standing a-jar. I heard our housemaid come up from the garden, with water for yonder flowers.

Manders. Well——?

Mrs. Alving. Soon after I heard Alving come too. I heard him say something softly to her. And then I heard—[*with a short laugh*] oh! it still sounds in my ears so hatefully and yet so laughably—I heard my own servant-maid whisper, "Let me go, Mr. Alving! Let me be."

Manders. What unseemly levity on his part! But it cannot have been more than levity, Mrs. Alving; believe me, it cannot.

Mrs. Alving. I soon got to know what to believe. Mr. Alving had his way with the girl; and that connection had consequences, Mr. Manders.

Manders [*as though petrified*]. Such things in this house! in this house!

Mrs. Alving. I had borne a great deal in this house. To keep him at home in the evenings—and at night—I had to make myself his boon-companion in his secret orgies up in his room. There I have had to sit alone with him, to clink glasses and drink with him, and listen to his ribald, silly talk. I have had to fight with him to get him dragged to bed——

Manders [*moved*]. And you were able to bear all that?

Mrs. Alving. I had my little son to bear it for. But when the last insult was added; when my own servant-maid. . . .

then I swore to myself: This shall come to an end. And so I took the upperhand in the house—the whole control over him and over everything else. For now I had a weapon against him, you see; he dared not oppose me. It was then that Oswald was sent from home. He was in his seventh year, and was beginning to observe and ask questions as children do. That I could not bear. I thought the child must get poisoned by merely breathing the air in this polluted home. That was why I placed him out. And now you can see, too, why he was never allowed to set foot inside his home so long as his father lived. No one knows what it has cost me.

Manders. You have indeed had a life of trial.

Mrs. Alving. I could never have borne it if I had not had had my work. For I may truly say that I have worked! All these additions to the estate—all the improvements—all the useful appliances that won Alving such general praise—do you suppose *he* had energy for anything of the sort?—he who lay all day on the sofa and read an old court guide! No; this I will tell you too: it was I who urged him on when he had his better intervals; it was I who had to drag the whole load when he relapsed into his evil ways, or sank into querulous wretchedness.

Manders. And it is to that man you raise a memorial.

Mrs. Alving. There you see the power of a bad conscience.

Manders. A bad . . . ? What do you mean?

Mrs. Alving. It always seemed to me impossible but that the truth must come out and be believed. So the Asylum was to deaden all rumours and banish doubt.

Manders. In that you have certainly not missed your aim, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving. And besides, I had one other reason. I did not wish that Oswald, my own boy, should inherit anything whatever from his father.

Manders. Then it is Alving's fortune that——?

Mrs. Alving. Yes. The sums which I have spent upon the Orphanage, year by year, make up the amount—I have reckoned it up precisely—the amount which made Lieutenant Alving a good match in his day.

Manders. I dont quite understand——

Mrs. Alving. It was my purchase-money. I do not choose that that money should pass into Oswald's hands. My son shall have everything from me—everything. [*Oswald Alving enters through the second door to the right; he has taken off his hat and overcoat in the hall. Mrs. Alving goes towards him.*] Are you back again already? my dear, dear boy!

Oswald. Yes. What can a fellow do out of doors in this eternal rain? But I hear dinner's ready. That's capital!

Regina [*with a parcel, from the dining-room*]. A parcel has come for you, Mrs. Alving [*hands it to her*].

Mrs. Alving [*with a glance at Mr. Manders*]. No doubt copies of the ode for to-morrow's ceremony.

Manders. Hm. . . .

Regina. And dinner is ready.

Mrs. Alving. Very well. We will come presently. I will just . . . [*begins to open the parcel*].

Regina [*to Oswald*]. Would Mr. Alving like red or white wine?

Oswald. Both, if you please.

Regina. Bien. Very well, sir. [*She goes into the dining-room.*]

Oswald. I may as well help uncork it. [*He also goes into the dining-room, the door of which swings half open behind him.*]

Mrs. Alving [*who has opened the parcel*]. Yes, as I thought. Here is the ceremonial ode, Pastor Manders.

Manders [*with folded hands*]. How I'm to deliver my discourse to-morrow without embarrassment——

Mrs. Alving. Oh! you'll get through it somehow.

Manders [*softly, so as not to be heard in the dining-room*]. Yes; it would not do to provoke scandal.

Mrs. Alving [*under her breath, but firmly*]. No. But then this long, hateful comedy will be ended. From the day after to-morrow it shall be for me as though he who is dead had never lived in this house. No one shall be here but my boy and his mother. [*From within the dining-room comes the noise of a chair overturned, and at the same moment is heard:*]

Regina [*sharply, but whispering*]. Oswald! take care! are you mad? Let me go!

Mrs. Alving [*starts in terror*]. Ah!

[*She stares wildly towards the half-opened door.* OSWALD *is heard coughing and humming inside. A bottle is uncorked.*]

Manders [*excited*]. What in the world is the matter? What is it, Mrs. Alving?

Mrs. Alving [*hoarsely*]. Ghosts! The couple from the conservatory has risen again!

Manders. What! Is it possible! Regina? Is she——?

Mrs. Alving. Yes. Come. Not another word!

[*She seizes* MR. MANDERS *by the arm, and walks unsteadily towards the dining-room.*]

ACT II.

[*The same room. The mist still lies heavy over the landscape.* MANDERS *and* MRS. ALVING *enter from the dining-room.*]

Mrs. Alving [*still in the doorway*]. *Velbekomme*,* Mr. Manders [*Turns back towards the dining-room.*] Aren't you coming too, Oswald?

Oswald [*from within*]. No, thank you. I think I shall go out a little.

Mrs Alving. Yes, do. The weather seems brighter now. [*She shuts the dining-room door, goes to the hall door, and calls,* Regina!

Regina [*outside*]. Yes, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving. Go down into the laundry, and help with the garlands.

Regina I'll go directly, Mrs. Alving.

[MRS. ALVING *assures herself that* REGINA *goes; then shuts the door.*]

Manders. I suppose he can't overhear us in there?

Mrs Alving. Not when the door is shut. Besides, he is just going out.

Manders I am still quite upset. I can't think how I could get down a bit of dinner.

Mrs. Alving [*controlling her nervousness, walks up and down*]. No more can I. But what is to be done now?

Manders. Yes; what is to be done? Upon my honour,

* A phrase equivalent to the German *Prosit die Mahlzeit*—"May good digestion wait on appetite."

I don't know. I am so utterly inexperienced in matters of this sort.

Mrs. Alving. I am quite convinced, that, so far, no mischief has been done.

Manders. No; Heaven forbid! But it is an unseemly state of things, nevertheless.

Mrs. Alving. The whole thing is an idle fancy of Oswald's; you may be sure of that.

Manders. Well, as I say, I'm not accustomed to affairs of the kind. But I should certainly think——

Mrs. Alving. Out of the house she must go, and that immediately. It is as clear as daylight.

Manders. Yes, of course she must.

Mrs. Alving. But where to? It would not be right to——

Manders. Where to? Home to her father, of course.

Mrs. Alving. To whom did you say?

Manders. To her—— But then, Engstrand is not——? But, good God, Mrs. Alving, how is that possible? You must be mistaken after all.

Mrs. Alving. Alas! I'm mistaken in nothing. Johanna confessed all to me, and Alving could not deny it. So there was nothing to be done but to get the matter hushed up.

Manders. No, you could do nothing else.

Mrs. Alving. The girl left our service at once, and got a good sum of money to hold her tongue for the time. The rest she managed for herself when she got into the town. She renewed her old acquaintance with Engstrand, the carpenter, gave him to understand, I've no doubt, how much money she had got, and told him some tale about a foreigner who put in here with a yacht that summer. So she and Engstrand got married in hot haste. Why, you married them yourself.

Manders. But then how to account for——? I recollect distinctly Engstrand coming to give notice of the marriage, He was broken down with contrition, and blamed himself so bitterly for the misbehaviour he and his sweetheart had been guilty of.

Mrs. Alving. Yes; of course he had to take the blame upon himself.

Manders. But such a piece of duplicity on his part! And towards me, too! I certainly never could have believed it of Jacob Engstrand. Ah! I shall not fail to give him a serious talking to; he may be sure of that. And then the immorality of such a connection! For money! What was the sum the girl had given her?

Mrs. Alving. It was three hundred dollars.

Manders. There! think of that! for a miserable three hundred dollars to go and marry a fallen woman!

Mrs. Alving. Then what have you to say of me? I went and married a fallen man.

Manders. But—good heavens!—what are you talking about? A fallen man?

Mrs. Alving. Do you think Alving was any purer when I went with him to the altar than Johanna was when Engstrand married her?

Manders. Well, but there's a world of difference between the two cases——

Mrs. Alving. Not so much difference after all, except in the price—a wretched three hundred dollars and a whole fortune.

Manders. How can you compare the two cases? You had taken counsel with your own heart and with your friends.

Mrs. Alving [*without looking at him*]. I thought you understood where what you call my heart had strayed to at the time.

Manders [*distantly*]. Had I understood anything of the kind, I should not have continued a daily guest in your husband's house.

Mrs. Alving. Well, the fact remains that with myself I took no counsel whatever.

Manders. Well, then, with your nearest relatives—as your duty bade you—with your mother and both your aunts.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, that is true. Those three cast up the account for me. Oh! it is marvellous how clearly they made out that it would be downright madness to refuse such an offer. If mother could only see me now and know what all that grandeur has come to.

Manders. Nobody can be held responsible for the result. This, at least, remains clear: your marriage was in accordance with law and order.

Mrs. Alving [*at the window*]. Oh! that perpetual law and order! I often think it is that which does all the mischief here in the world.

Manders. Mrs. Alving, that is a sinful way of talking.

Mrs. Alving. Well, I can't help it; I can endure all this constraint and cowardice no longer. It is too much for me. I must work my way out to freedom.

Manders. What do you mean by that?

Mrs. Alving [*drumming on the window-sill*]. I ought never to have concealed the facts of Alving's life. But at that time I dared do nothing else—even for my own sake. I was such a coward.

Manders. A coward?

Mrs. Alving. If people had got to know anything, they would have said—"Poor man! with a runaway wife, no wonder he kicks over the traces."

Manders. Such remarks might have been made with a certain show of right.

Mrs. Alving [*looking steadily at him*]. If I were what I ought to be, I should go to Oswald and say, "Listen, my boy; your father was self-indulgent and vicious——"

Manders. Merciful heavens——!

Mrs. Alving. ——and then I should tell him all I have told you—every word of it.

Manders. The idea is shocking, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving. Yes; I know that. I know that very well. I am myself shocked at it. [*Goes away from the window.*] I am such a coward.

Manders. You call it "cowardice" to do your plain duty? Have you forgotten that a son should love and honour his father and mother?

Mrs. Alving. Don't let us talk in such general terms. Let us ask: Should Oswald love and honour Chamberlain Alving?

Manders. Is there no voice in your mother's heart that forbids you to destroy your son's ideals?

Mrs. Alving. But what about the truth?

Manders. But what about the ideals?

Mrs. Alving. Oh! Ideals! Ideals! If I only weren't such a coward as I am!

Manders. Do not despise ideals, Mrs. Alving; they will avenge themselves cruelly, and especially in Oswald's case. Oswald, unfortunately, seems to have few enough ideals as it is. But so much I can see: his father stands before him as an ideal.

Mrs. Alving. You are right there.

Manders. And this conception of his father you have yourself implanted and fostered in his mind by your letters.

Mrs. Alving. Yes; in my superstitious awe for Duty and Decency I lied to my boy, year after year. Oh! what a coward, what a coward I have been!

Manders. You have established a happy illusion in your son's heart, Mrs. Alving, and assuredly you ought not to undervalue it.

Mrs. Alving. Hm; who knows whether it is so happy after all——? But, at any rate, I won't have any goings-on with Regina. He shall not go and ruin the poor girl.

Manders. No; good God! that would be dreadful!

Mrs. Alving. If I knew he was in earnest, and that it would be for his happiness——

Manders. What? What then?

Mrs. Alving. But it could not be; for I'm sorry to say Regina is not a girl to make him happy.

Manders. Well, what then? What do you mean?

Mrs. Alving. If I were not such a pitiful coward I would say to him, "Marry her, or make what arrangement you please, only let us have no deception."

Manders. But, good heavens! would you let them *marry!* anything so dreadful——! so unheard of——!

Mrs. Alving. Do you really mean "unheard of?" Frankly, Pastor Manders, don't you suppose that through out the country there are plenty of married couples as closely akin as they?

Manders. I don't in the least understand you.

Mrs. Alving. Oh yes, indeed you do.

Manders. Ah, you are thinking of the possibility that—— Yes! alas! family life is certainly not always so pure as it ought to be. But in such a case as you point to one can never know—at least with any certainty. Here, on the other hand—that you, a mother, can think of letting your son——!

Mrs. Alving. But I can't—I would not for anything in the world; that is precisely what I am saying.

Manders. No, because you are a "coward," as you put it.

But if you were not a "coward" then——? Good God! a connection so shocking!

Mrs. Alving. So far as that goes, they say we are all sprung from connections of that sort. And who is it arranged the world so, Pastor Manders?

Manders. Questions of that sort I must decline to discuss with you, Mrs. Alving; you are far from being in the right frame of mind for them. But that you dare to call your scruples "cowardly."

Mrs. Alving. Let me tell you what I mean. I am timid and half-hearted because I cannot get rid of the Ghosts that haunt me.

Manders. What do you say haunts you?

Mrs. Alving. Ghosts! When I heard Regina and Oswald in there, it was as though I saw Ghosts before me. But I almost think we are all of us Ghosts, Pastor Manders. It is not only what we have inherited from our father and mother that "walks" in us. It is all sorts of dead ideas, and lifeless old beliefs, and so forth. They have no vitality, but they cling to us all the same, and we can't get rid of them. Whenever I take up a newspaper I seem to see Ghosts gliding between the lines. There must be Ghosts all the country over, as thick as the sand of the sea. And then we are, one and all, so pitifully afraid of the light.

Manders. Ah! here we have the fruits of your reading! And pretty fruits they are, upon my word! Oh! those horrible, revolutionary, free-thinking books!

Mrs. Alving. You are mistaken, my dear Pastor. It was you yourself who set me thinking; and I thank you for it with all my heart.

Manders. I?

Mrs. Alving. Yes. When you forced me under the yoke you called Duty and Obligation; when you praised as right

and proper what my whole soul rebelled against, as against something loathsome. It was then that I began to look into the seams of your doctrine. I only wished to pick at a single knot; but when I had got that undone, the whole thing ravelled out. And then I understood that it was all machine-sewn.

Manders [*softly, with emotion*]. And was that the upshot of my life's hardest battle?

Mrs. Alving. Call it, rather, your most pitiful defeat.

Manders. It was my greatest victory, Helen—the victory over myself.

Mrs. Alving. It was a crime against us both.

Manders. When you went astray, and came to me crying, "Here I am; take me!" I commanded you, saying—"Woman, go home to your lawful husband." Was that a crime?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, I think so.

Manders. We two do not understand each other.

Mrs. Alving. Not now, at any rate.

Manders. Never—never in my most secret thoughts have I regarded you otherwise than as another's wife.

Mrs. Alving. Oh!—indeed?

Manders. Helen——!

Mrs. Alving. People so easily forget their past selves.

Manders. I do not. I am what I always was.

Mrs. Alving [*changing the subject*]. Well, well, well; don't let us talk of old times any longer. You are now over head and ears in Commissions and Boards of Direction, and I am fighting my fight with Ghosts both within me and without.

Manders. Those without I shall help you to lay. After all the shocking things I have heard from you to-day, I cannot in conscience permit an unprotected girl to remain in your house.

Mrs. Alving. Don't you think it would be the best plan to get her provided for?—I mean, by a good marriage.

Manders. No doubt. I think it would be desirable for her in every respect. Regina is just now at the age when ——. Of course I don't know much about these things, but——

Mrs. Alving. Regina matured very early.

Manders. Yes! did she not? I have an impression that she was remarkably well developed, physically, when I prepared her for confirmation. But, in the meantime, she must go home, under her father's eye.—Ah! but Engstrand is not—— That he—that *he* could so hide the truth from me!

[*A knock at the door into the hall.*]

Mrs. Alving. Who can that be? Come in!

Engstrand [*in his Sunday clothes, in the doorway*]. I beg your pardon humbly, but——

Manders. Ah! Hm——

Mrs. Alving. Is that you, Engstrand?

Engstrand. ——there was none of the servants about, so I took the great liberty of just knocking.

Mrs. Alving. Oh! very well. Come in. Is there anything you want to speak to me about?

Engstrand [*comes in*]. No; I'm greatly obliged to you; it was with his Reverence I wanted to have a word or two.

Manders [*walking up and down the room*]. Hm—indeed! You want to speak to me, do you?

Engstrand. Yes, I should like so much to——

Manders [*stops in front of him*]. Well. May I ask what you want?

Engstrand. Well, it was just this, your Reverence; we've been paid off down yonder—my grateful thanks to you,

ma'am.—And now everything's finished, I've been thinking it would be but right and proper if we, that have been working so honestly together all this time—well, I was thinking we ought to end up with a little prayer-meeting to-night.

Manders. A prayer-meeting? Down at the Orphanage?

Engstrand. Oh, if your Reverence doesn't think it proper——

Manders. Oh yes! I do; but—Hm——

Engstrand. I've been in the habit of offering up a little prayer in the evenings, myself.

Mrs. Alving. Have you?

Engstrand. Yes, every now and then—just a little exercise, you might call it. But I am a poor, common man, and have little enough gift, God help me! and so I thought, as the Reverend Mr. Manders happened to be here, I'd——

Manders. Well, you see, Engstrand, I must first ask you a question. Are you in the right frame of mind for such a meeting? Do you feel your conscience clear and at ease?

Engstrand. Oh! God help us! your Reverence, we'd better not talk about conscience.

Manders. Yes, that's just what we must talk about. What have you to answer?

Engstrand. Why—one's conscience—it can be bad enough now and then.

Manders. Ah, you admit that. Then will you make a clean breast of it, and tell the truth about Regina?

Mrs. Alving [*quickly*]. Mr. Manders!

Manders [*reassuringly*]. Just let me——

Engstrand. About Regina! Lord! how you frighten me! [*Looks at Mrs. Alving.*] There's nothing wrong about Regina, is there?

Manders. We will hope not. But I mean, what is the

truth about you and Regina? You pass for her father, eh?

Engstrand [*uncertain*]. Well—hm—your Reverence knows all about me and poor Johanna.

Manders. Come, no more prevarication! Your wife told Mrs. Alving the whole story before quitting her service.

Engstrand. Well, then, may——! Now, did she really?

Manders. So you are found out, Engstrand.

Engstrand. And she swore and took her Bible oath——

Manders. Did she take her Bible oath?

Engstrand. No; she only swore; but she did it so earnestly.

Manders. And you have hidden the truth from me all these years? Hidden it from me! from me, who have trusted you without reserve, in everything.

Engstrand. Well, I can't deny it.

Manders. Have I deserved this of you, Engstrand? Haven't I always been ready to help you in word and deed, so far as it stood in my power? Answer me. Have I not?

Engstrand. It would have been a poor look-out for me many a time but for the Reverend Mr. Manders.

Manders. And you reward me thus! You cause me to enter falsehoods in the Church Register, and you withhold from me, year after year, the explanations you owed alike to me and to truth. Your conduct has been wholly inexcusable, Engstrand; and from this time forward all is over between us.

Engstrand [*with a sigh*]. Yes! I suppose it must be.

Manders. How can you possibly justify yourself?

Engstrand. How could I think that she had made bad worse by talking about it? Will your Reverence just fancy yourself in the same trouble as poor Johanna——

Manders. I!

Engstrand. Lord bless you! I don't mean so exactly the same. But I mean, if your Reverence had anything to be ashamed of in the eyes of the world, as the saying is.—— We men oughtn't to judge a poor woman too hardly, your Reverence.

Manders. I am not doing so, It is you I am reproaching.

Engstrand. Might I make so bold as to ask your Reverence a bit of a question?

Manders. Yes, ask away.

Engstrand. Isn't it right and proper for a man to raise up the fallen?

Manders. Most certainly it is.

Engstrand. And isn't a man bound to keep his sacred word?

Manders. Why! of course he is; but——

Engstrand. When Johanna had got into trouble through that Englishman—or it might have been an American or a Russian, as they call them—well, you see, she came down into the town. Poor thing! she'd sent me about my business once or twice before: for she couldn't bear the sight or anything but what was handsome; and I'd got this damaged leg. Your Reverence recollects how I ventured up into a dancing-saloon, where seafaring people carried on with drink and devilry, as the saying goes. And then, when I was for giving them a bit of an admonition to lead a new life——

Mrs. Alving [*at the window*]. Hm——

Manders. I know all about that, Engstrand; these ruffians threw you downstairs. You have told me of the affair already.

Engstrand. I am not puffed up about it, your Reverence. But what I wanted to tell was, that then she came and confessed all to me, with weeping and gnashing of

teeth, I can tell your Reverence I was sore at heart to hear it.

Manders. Were you indeed, Engstrand? Well, go on.

Engstrand. So I said to her, "The American, he's sailing about on the boundless sea. And as for you, Johanna," said I, "you've committed a grievous sin and you're a fallen creature. But Jacob Engstrand," said I, "he's got two good legs to stand upon, *he* has——." You know, your Reverence, I was speaking figuratively-like.

Manders. I understand quite well. Go on.

Engstrand. Well, that was how I raised her up and made an honest woman of her, so that folks shouldn't get to know how she'd gone astray with foreigners.

Manders. All that was very good for you. Only I can't approve of your stooping to take money——

Engstrand. Money? I? Not a farthing!

Manders [*inquiringly to Mrs. Alving*]. But——

Engstrand. Oh! wait a minute; now I recollect. Johanna had a trifle of money. But I would have nothing to do with it. "No," said I, "that's mammon; that's the wages of sin. This dirty gold—or notes, or whatever it was—we'll just fling that back to the American," said I. But he was gone and away, over the stormy sea, your Reverence.

Manders. Was he really, my good fellow?

Engstrand. Ay, Sir. So Johanna and I, we agreed that the money should go to the child's education; and so it did, and I can give account for every blessed farthing of it.

Manders. Why! This alters the case considerably.

Engstrand. That's just how it stands, your Reverence. And I make so bold as to say I've been an honest father to Regina, so far as my poor strength went; for I'm but a poor creature, worse luck!

Manders. Well, well, my good fellow——

Engstrand. But I may make bold to say that I have brought up the child, and lived kindly with poor Johanna, and ruled over my own house, as the Scripture has it. But I could never think of going up to your Reverence and puffing myself up and boasting because I, too, had done some good in the world. No, sir; when anything of that sort happens to Jacob Engstrand, he holds his tongue about it. It doesn't happen so very often, I daresay. And when I do come to see your Reverence, I find a mortal deal to say about what's wicked and weak. For I do say—as I was saying just now—one's conscience isn't always as clean as it might be.

Manders. Give me your hand, Jacob Engstrand.

Engstrand. Oh, Lord! your Reverence——

Manders. No getting out of it [*wrings his hand*]. There we are!

Engstrand. And if I might humbly beg your Reverence's pardon——

Manders. You? On the contrary, it is I who ought to beg your pardon——

Engstrand. Lord, no, sir!

Manders. Yes, certainly. And I do it with all my heart. Forgive me for misunderstanding you. And I wish I could give you some proof of my hearty regret, and of my good-will towards you——

Engstrand. Would your Reverence?

Manders. With the greatest pleasure.

Engstrand. Well, then, there's the very opportunity now. With the money I've saved here, I was thinking I might found a Sailors' Home down in the town.

Mrs. Alving. *You* want to?

Engstrand. Yes; it, too, might be a sort of Orphanage,

in a manner of speaking. There are many temptations for sea-faring folk ashore. But in this little house of mine, a man might feel as under a father's eye, I was thinking.

Manders. What do you say to this, Mrs. Alving?

Engstrand. It isn't much I've got to start with, the Lord help me! But if I could only find a helping hand, why——

Manders. Yes, yes; we'll look into the matter. I entirely approve of your plan. But now, go before me and make everything ready, and get the candles lighted, so as to give the place an air of festivity. And then we will pass an edifying hour together, my good fellow; for now I quite believe you are in the right frame of mind.

Engstrand. Yes, I trust I am. And so I'll say good-bye, Ma'am, and thank you kindly; and take good care of Regina for me—[*wipes a tear from his eye*]—poor Johanna's child; hm, that's an odd thing, now; but it's just as if she'd grown into the very core of my heart. It is indeed.

[*He bows and goes out through the hall.*]

Manders. Well, what do you say about that man now, Mrs. Alving? That threw a totally different light on matters, didn't it?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, it certainly did.

Manders. It only shows you how excessively careful one must be in judging one's fellow-creatures. But it's a great joy to ascertain that one has been mistaken. Don't you think so?

Mrs. Alving. I think that you are, and will remain, a great baby, Manders.

Manders. I?

Mrs. Alving [*laying both hands upon his shoulder*]. And I say that I've half a mind to fall on your neck, and kiss you.

Manders [*stepping hastily back*]. No, no; God bless us! What an idea!

Mrs. Alving [*with a smile*]. Oh! you need not be afraid of me.

Manders [*by the table*]. You have sometimes such an exaggerated way of expressing yourself. Now, I'll just collect all the documents, and put them in my bag. [*He does so.*] There, now. And now, good-bye for the present. Keep your eyes open when Oswald comes back. I shall look in again later.

[*He takes his hat and goes out through the hall door.*]

[*Mrs. Alving heaves a sigh, looks for a moment out of the window, sets the room in order a little, and is about to go into the dining-room, but stops at the door with a half-surprised cry*]. Oswald, are you still at table?

Oswald [*in the dining-room*]. I am only finishing my cigar.

Mrs. Alving. I thought you had gone a little walk.

Oswald. In such weather as this? [*A glass clinks.* MRS. ALVING *leaves the door open, and sits down with her knitting on the sofa by the window.*] Wasn't that Pastor Manders who went away just now?

Mrs. Alving. Yes; he went down to the Orphanage.

Oswald. Hm. [*The glass and decanter clink again.*]

Mrs. Alving [*with a troubled glance*]. Dear Oswald, you should take care of that liqueur. It is strong.

Oswald. It keeps out the damp.

Mrs. Alving. Wouldn't you rather come in to me?

Oswald. I mayn't smoke in there.

Mrs. Alving. You know quite well that you may smoke cigars.

Oswald. Oh! all right then; I'll come in. Just a tiny

drop more first! There! [*He comes into the room with his cigar, and shuts the door after him. A short silence.*] Where's Manders gone to?

Mrs. Alving. I've just told you; he went down to the Orphanage.

Oswald. Oh, ah; so you did.

Mrs. Alving. You shouldn't sit so long at the table after dinner, Oswald.

Oswald [*holding his cigar behind him*]. But I find it so pleasant, Mother. [*Strokes and pets her.*] Just think what it is for me to come home and sit at Mother's own table, in Mother's room, and eat Mother's delicious dinner.

Mrs. Alving. My dear, dear boy!

Oswald [*somewhat impatiently walks about and smokes*]. And what else can I do with myself here? I can't set to work at anything.

Mrs. Alving. Why can't you?

Oswald. In such weather as this? Without a single ray of sunlight the whole day? [*Walks up the room.*] Oh! not to be able to work!

Mrs. Alving. Perhaps it was not quite wise of you to come home?

Oswald. Oh, yes, Mother; I had to.

Mrs. Alving. Why? I would ten times rather forego the joy of having you here than——

Oswald (*stops beside the table*). Now just tell me, Mother; does it really make you so very happy to have me home again?

Mrs. Alving. Does it make me happy!

Oswald [*crumpling up a newspaper*]. I should have thought it must be pretty much the same to you whether I was in existence or not.

Mrs. Alving. Have you the heart to say that to your mother, Oswald?

Oswald. But you've got on very well without me all this time.

Mrs. Alving. Yes; I've got on without you. That is true.

[*A silence. Twilight gradually falls.* OSWALD *walks to and fro across the room. He has laid his cigar down.*]

Oswald [*stops beside* MRS. ALVING]. Mother, may I sit down on the sofa by you?

Mrs. Alving [*makes room for him*]. Yes; do, my dear boy.

Oswald [*sits down*]. Now I am going to tell you something, Mother.

Mrs. Alving [*anxiously*]. Well?

Oswald [*looks fixedly before him*]. For I can't go on hiding it any longer.

Mrs. Alving. Hiding what? What is it?

Oswald [*as before*]. I could never bring myself to write to you about it; and since I've come home——

Mrs. Alving [*seizes him by the arm*]. Oswald, what *is* the matter?

Oswald [*as before*]. Both yesterday and to-day I have tried to put the thoughts away from me——to get free from them; but it won't do.

Mrs. Alving [*rising*]. Now you must speak out, Oswald.

Oswald [*draws her down to the sofa again*]. Sit still; and then I will try and tell you. I complained of fatigue after my journey——

Mrs. Alving. Well, what then?

Oswald. But it isn't that that's the matter with me; it isn't any ordinary fatigue. . . .

Mrs. Alving [*tries to jump up*]. You're not ill, Oswald?

Oswald [*draws her down again*]. Do sit still, mother. Only take it quietly. I am not downright ill, either; not what is commonly called "ill." [*Clasps his hands above*

his head.] Mother, my mind is broken down—ruined—I shall never be able to work again. [*With his hands before his face, he buries his head in her lap, and breaks into bitter sobbing.*]

Mrs. Alving [*white and trembling*]. Oswald! Look at me! No, no; it isn't true.

Oswald [*looks up with despair in his eyes*]. Never be able to work again. Never, never! It will be like living death! Mother, can you imagine anything so horrible?

Mrs. Alving. My poor boy! How has this horrible thing come over you?

Oswald [*sits upright*]. That's just what I can't possibly grasp or understand. I have never led an unsteady life—never, in any respect. You must not believe that of me, Mother. I have never done that.

Mrs. Alving. I'm sure you haven't, Oswald.

Oswald. And yet this has come over me just the same—this awful misfortune!

Mrs. Alving. Oh! but it will pass away, my dear, blessed boy. It is nothing but over-exertion. Trust me, I am right.

Oswald [*sadly*]. I thought so too at first; but it isn't so.

Mrs. Alving. Tell me the whole story from beginning to end.

Oswald. Well, I will.

Mrs. Alving. When did you first notice it?

Oswald. It was directly after I had been home last time, and had got back to Paris again. I began to feel the most violent pains in my head—chiefly in the back of my head, I thought. It was as though a tight iron ring was being screwed round my neck and upwards.

Mrs. Alving. Well, and then?

Oswald. At first I thought it was nothing but the ordinary headache I had been so plagued with when I was growing up. . . .

Mrs. Alving. Yes, yes. . . .

Oswald. But it was not that. I soon found that out. I could no longer work. I wanted to begin upon a big new picture, but it was as though my powers failed me; all my strength was crippled; I could not form any definite images; it all swam before me—whirling round and round. Oh! it was an awful state! At last I sent for a doctor, and from him I got to know the truth.

Mrs. Alving. How do you mean?

Oswald. He was one of the first doctors in Paris. I told him my symptoms, and then he set to work asking me a heap of questions which I thought had nothing to do with the matter. I couldn't imagine what the man was after. . . .

Mrs. Alving. Well.

Oswald. At last he said: "You have been worm-eaten from your birth." He used that very word—*vermoulu.*

Mrs. Alving [*breathlessly*]. What did he mean by that?

Oswald. I didn't understand either, and begged of him to give me a clearer explanation. And then the old cynic said [*clenching his fist*] Oh!——

Mrs. Alving. What did he say?

Oswald. He said, "The fathers' sins are visited upon the children."

Mrs. Alving [*rising slowly*]. The fathers' sins . . . . !

Oswald. I very nearly struck him in the face . . .

Mrs. Alving [*walks away across the floor*]. The fathers' sins!

Oswald [*smiles sadly*]. Yes; what do you think of that? Of course I assured him that such a thing was out of the

question. But do you think he gave in? No, he stuck to it; and it was only when I produced your letters and translated to him the passages relating to father——

Mrs. Alving. But then?

Oswald. Then he was of course bound to admit that he was on the wrong track, and so I got to know the truth—the incomprehensible truth! I ought to have held aloof from my bright and happy student-life among my fellows. It had been too much for my strength. So I had brought it upon myself.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald! Oh, no! don't believe it.

Oswald. No other explanation was possible, he said. That is the awful part of it. Incurably ruined for my whole life—by my own heedlessness! All that I meant to have done in the world, . . . I never dare think of again. I am not *able* to think of it. Oh! if I could but live over again, and undo all I have done! [*He buries his face in the sofa.* MRS. ALVING *wrings her hands and walks, in silent struggle, backwards and forwards.* OSWALD, *after a while, looks up and remains resting upon his elbow.*] If it had only been something inherited, something one wasn't responsible for! But this! To have thrown away so shamefully, thoughtlessly, recklessly, one's own happiness, one's own health, everything in the world—one's future, one's very life!

Mrs. Alving. No, no, my dear, darling boy! It is impossible. [*Bends over him.*] Things are not so desperate as you think.

Oswald. Oh! you don't know—— [*Springs up.*] And then, Mother, to cause you all this sorrow! Many a time have I almost wished and hoped that at bottom you did not care so very much about me.

Mrs. Alving. I, Oswald? my only boy! You are all I have in the world! The only thing I care about!

Oswald [*seizes both her hands and kisses them*]. Yes, Mother dear, I see it well enough. When I am at home, I see it, of course; and that is the hardest part for me. But now you know all about it, and now we won't talk any more about it to-day. I daren't think about it for long together. [*Goes up the room.*] Get me something to drink, Mother.

Mrs. Alving. Drink? What do you want to drink now?

Oswald. Oh! anything you like. You've got some cold punch in the house.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, but my dear Oswald——

Oswald. Don't refuse me, Mother. Do be nice, now! I must have something to wash down all these gnawing thoughts. [*Goes into the conservatory.*] And then—— it is so dark here! [*Mrs. Alving pulls a bell-rope on her right.*] And this ceaseless rain! It may go on week after week for months together. Never to get a glimpse of the sun! I can't recollect ever to have seen the sun shine all the times I've been at home.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald, you are thinking of going away from me.

Oswald [*drawing a deep breath*]. I am not thinking of anything. I *can't* think of anything. [*In a low voice.*] I let thinking alone.

Regina [*from the dining-room.*] Did you ring, Ma'am?

Mrs. Alving. Yes; let us have the lamp in.

Regina. I will, directly. It is ready lighted. [*Goes out.*]

Mrs. Alving [*goes across to Oswald*]. Oswald, be frank with me.

Oswald. Well, so I am, Mother. [*Goes to the table.*] I think I have told you enough.

[REGINA *brings the lamp and sets it upon the table.*]

Mrs. Alving. Regina, you might fetch us half a bottle of champagne.

Regina. Very well, ma'am. [*Goes out.*]

Oswald [*puts his arm round Mrs. Alving's neck*]. That's just what I wanted. I knew Mother wouldn't let her boy be thirsty.

Mrs. Alving. My own, poor, darling Oswald, how could I deny you anything now?

Oswald [*eagerly*]. Is that true, Mother? Do you mean it?

Mrs. Alving. How? What?

Oswald. That you couldn't deny me anything.

Mrs. Alving. My dear Oswald——

Oswald. Hush!

Regina [*brings a tray with a half-bottle of champagne and two glasses, which she sets on the table*]. Shall I open it?

Oswald. No, thanks. I'll do it myself.

[REGINA *walks out again.*]

Mrs. Alving [*sits down by the table*]. What was it you meant, I mustn't deny you?

Oswald [*busy opening the bottle*]. First let's have a glass —or two.

[*The cork pops; he pours wine into one glass, and is about to pour it into the other.*]

Mrs. Alving [*holding her hand over it*]. Thanks; not for me.

Oswald. Oh! won't you? Then I will!

[*He empties the glass, fills, and empties it again; then he sits down by the table.*]

Mrs. Alving [*in expectation*]. Well?

Oswald [*without looking at her*]. Tell me—I thought you and Pastor Manders looked so odd—well, so awfully quiet at the dinner-table to-day.

Mrs. Alving. Did you notice it?

Oswald. Yes. Hm—— [*After a short silence.*] Tell me, what do you think of Regina?

Mrs. Alving. What I think?

Oswald. Yes; isn't she splendid?

Mrs. Alving. My dear Oswald, you don't know her so well as I do.

Oswald. Well?

Mrs. Alving. Regina, unfortunately, was allowed to stay at home too long. I ought to have taken her earlier into my house.

Oswald. Yes, but isn't she splendid to look at, Mother?

[*He fills his glass.*]

Mrs. Alving. Regina has many serious faults.

Oswald. Oh, I daresay. What does it matter?

[*He drinks again.*]

Mrs. Alving. But I'm fond of her, nevertheless, and I am responsible for her. I wouldn't have any harm happen to her for all the world.

Oswald [*springs up*]. Mother! Regina is my only salvation.

Mrs. Alving [*rising*]. What do you mean by that?

Oswald. I can't go on bearing all this misery of mind alone.

Mrs. Alving. Have you not got your mother to share it with you?

Oswald. Yes; that's what I thought; and so I came home to you. But that won't do. I see it won't do. I can't endure my life here.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald!

Oswald. I must live in a different way, Mother. That's why I must go away from you. I won't have you looking on at it.

Mrs. Alving. My unhappy boy! But, Oswald, while you are so ill as at present——

Oswald. If it were only the illness, I should stay with you, Mother, you may be sure; for you are the best friend I have in the world.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, indeed I am, Oswald; am I not?

Oswald [*wanders restlessly about*]. But it is all the torment, the remorse; and besides that, the great, deadly fear. Oh! that awful fear!

Mrs. Alving [*walking after him*]. Fear; what fear? What do you mean?

Oswald. Oh! you mustn't ask me any more. I don't know. I can't describe it to you. [MRS. ALVING *goes over to the right and pulls the bell.*] What is it you want?

Mrs. Alving. I want my boy to be happy—that is what I want. He shall not go on racking his brains. [*To* REGINA, *who comes in the door:*] More champagne—a whole bottle.

[REGINA *goes.*]

Oswald. Mother!

Mrs. Alving. Do you think we don't know how to live out here in the country?

Oswald. Isn't she splendid to look at? How beautifully she's built. And so healthy to the core!

Mrs. Alving [*sits down by the table*]. Sit down, Oswald; let us talk quietly together.

Oswald [*sits down*]. I daresay you don't know, Mother, that I owe Regina some reparation.

Mrs. Alving. You?

Oswald. For a bit of thoughtlessness, or whatever you like to call it—very innocent, anyhow. When I was home last time——

Mrs. Alving. Well?

Oswald. She used so often to ask me about Paris, and I

used to tell her one thing and another. Then I recollect I happened to say to her one day, "Wouldn't you like to come down there yourself?"

Mrs. Alving. Well?

Oswald. I saw that she blushed deeply, and then she said, "Yes, I should like it of all things." "Ah! well," I replied, "it might perhaps be managed"—or something like that.

Mrs. Alving. And then?

Oswald. Of course I had forgotten the whole thing; but the day before yesterday I happened to ask her whether she was glad I was to stay at home so long——

Mrs. Alving. Yes?

Oswald. And then she looked so strangely at me and asked, "But what is to become of my trip to Paris?"

Mrs. Alving. Her trip!

Oswald. And so I got out of her that she had taken the thing seriously; that she had been thinking of me the whole time; and had set at work to learn French——

Mrs. Alving. So that was why she did it!

Oswald. Mother! when I saw that fresh, lovely, splendid girl standing there before me—till then I had hardly noticed her—but when she stood there as though with open arms ready to receive me——

Mrs. Alving. Oswald!

Oswald. ——then it flashed upon me that my salvation was in her; for I saw that she was full of the joy of life.*

Mrs. Alving [*starts*]. The joy of life? Can there be salvation in that?

Regina [*from the dining-room with a bottle of champagne*]. I'm sorry to have been so long, but I had to go to the cellar. [*Puts the bottle on the table.*]

* Livsglæde—"la joie de vivre."

Oswald. And now fetch another glass.

Regina [*looks at him in surprise*]. There is Mrs. Alving's glass, Mr. Alving.

Oswald. Yes, but fetch one for yourself, Regina. [REGINA *starts and gives a lightning-like side-glance at* MRS. ALVING.] Why do you wait?

Regina [*softly and hesitatingly*]. Is it Mrs. Alving's wish?

Mrs. Alving. Fetch the glass, Regina.

[REGINA *goes out into the dining-room.*]

Oswald [*follows her with his eyes*]. Have you noticed how she walks?—so firmly and lightly!

Mrs. Alving. It can never be, Oswald.

Oswald. It's a settled thing. Can't you see that. It is no use to say anything against it. [REGINA *enters with an empty glass, which she keeps in her hand.*] Sit down, Regina.

[REGINA *looks enquiringly at* MRS. ALVING.]

Mrs. Alving. Sit down. [REGINA *sits down on a chair by the dining-room door, still holding the empty glass in her hand.*] Oswald, what were you saying about the joy of life?

Oswald. Ah! the joy of life, Mother; that's a thing you don't know much about in these parts. I have never felt it here.

Mrs. Alving. Not when you are with me?

Oswald. Not when I'm at home. But you don't understand that.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, yes; I think I almost understand it—now.

Oswald. And then, too, the joy of work. At bottom, it's the same thing. But that too you know nothing about.

Mrs. Alving. Perhaps you are right, Oswald; let me hear more about it.

Oswald. Well, I only mean that here people are brought

up to believe that work is a curse and a punishment for sin, and that life is something miserable, something we had better be done with, the sooner the better.

Mrs. Alving. "A vale of tears," yes; and we act up to our professions and make it one.

Oswald. But in the great world people won't hear of such things. There, nobody really believes such doctrines any longer. There, you feel it bliss and ecstasy merely to draw the breath of life. Mother, have you noticed that everything I have painted has turned upon the joy of life? always, always upon the joy of life?—light and sunshine and glorious air and faces radiant with happiness. That is why I am afraid of remaining at home with you.

Mrs. Alving. Afraid? What are you afraid of here, with me.

Oswald. I am afraid that all that is germinating in me would develop into ugliness.

Mrs. Alving [*looks steadily at him*]. Do you think that would be the way of it?

Oswald. I know it. You may live the same life here as there, and yet it won't be the same life.

Mrs. Alving [*who has been listening eagerly, rises, her eyes big with thoughts, and says:*] Now I see the connection.

Oswald. What is it you see?

Mrs. Alving. I see it now for the first time. And now I can speak.

Oswald [*rising*]. Mother, I don't understand you.

Regina [*who has also risen*]. Perhaps I ought to go?

Mrs. Alving. No. Stay here. Now I can speak. Now, my boy, you shall know the whole truth. And then you can choose. Oswald! Regina!

Oswald. Hush! Here's Manders.

Manders [*comes in by the hall door*]. There! We've had a most edifying time down there.

Oswald. So have we.

Manders. We must stand by Engstrand and his Sailors' Home. Regina must go to him and help him——

Regina. No, thank you, Sir.

Manders [*noticing her for the first time*]. What? You here? and with a glass in your hand!

Regina [*hastily putting the glass down*]. *Pardon!*

Oswald. Regina is going with me, Mr. Manders.

Manders. Going with you!

Oswald. Yes; as my wife—if she wishes it.

Manders. But, good God——!

Regina. It's none of my doing, Sir.

Oswald. Or she will stay here, if I stay.

Regina [*involuntarily*]. Here!

Manders. I am thunderstruck at your conduct, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving. They will do neither one thing nor the other; for now I can speak out plainly.

Manders. You surely won't do that. No, no, no.

Mrs. Alving. Yes. I can speak and I will. And no ideal shall suffer after all.

Oswald. Mother! What on earth are you hiding from me?

Regina [*listening*]. Oh! Ma'am! listen! Don't you hear shouts outside.

[*She goes into the conservatory and looks out.*]

Oswald [*at the window on the left*]. What's going on? Where does that light come from?

Regina [*cries out*]. The Orphanage is on fire!

Mrs. Alving [*rushing to the window*]. On fire?

Manders. On fire! Impossible! I have just come from there.

Oswald. Where's my hat? Oh, never mind it—Father's Orphanage! [*He rushes out through the garden door.*]

Mrs. Alving. My shawl, Regina! It is blazing.

Manders. Terrible! Mrs. Alving, it is a judgment upon this abode of sin.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, of course. Come, Regina.

[*She and* REGINA *hasten out through the hall.*]

Manders [*folds his hands together*]. And uninsured, too!

[*He goes out the same way.*]

ACT III.

[*The room as before. All the doors stand open. The lamp is still burning on the table. It is dark out of doors; there is only a faint glow from the conflagration in the background to the left.* MRS. ALVING, *with a shawl over her head, stands in the conservatory and looks out.* REGINA, *also with a shawl on, stands a little behind her.*]

Mrs. Alving. All burnt!—burnt to the ground!

Regina. The basement is still burning.

Mrs. Alving. How is it Oswald doesn't come home? There's nothing to be saved.

Regina. Would you like me to take down his hat to him?

Mrs. Alving. Hasn't he even got his hat on?

Regina [*pointing to the hall*]. No; there it hangs.

Mrs. Alving. Let it be. He must come up now. I will go and look for him myself.

[*She goes out through the garden door.*]

Manders [*comes in from the hall*]. Isn't Mrs. Alving here?

Regina. She's just gone down the garden.

Manders. This is the most terrible night I ever lived through.

Regina. Yes; isn't it a dreadful misfortune, sir?

Manders. Oh! don't talk about it! I can hardly bear to think of it.

Regina. How *can* it have happened?

Manders. Don't ask me, Regina! How should *I* know? Do *you*, too?—Isn't it enough that your father——?

Regina. What about him?

Manders. Oh! he has driven me clean out of my mind——

Engstrand [*comes through the hall*]. Your Reverence!

Manders [*turns round in terror*]. Are you after me here, too?

Engstrand. Yes; Lord, strike me dead, but I must—— It's an awfully ugly business, your Reverence.

Manders [*walks to and fro*]. Alas! alas!

Regina. What is the matter?

Engstrand. Why, it all came of that prayer-meeting, you see. [*Softly.*] The bird's limed, my girl. [*Aloud.*] And to think that it's my fault that it's his Reverence's fault!

Manders. But I assure you, Engstrand——

Engstrand. But there wasn't another soul except your Reverence that ever touched the candles down there.

Manders [*stops*]. Ah! so you declare. But I certainly can't recollect that I ever had a candle in my hand.

Engstrand. And I saw as clear as daylight how your Reverence took the light and snuffed it with your fingers, and threw away the snuff among the shavings.

Manders. And you stood and looked on?

Engstrand. Yes. I saw it as plain as a pike-staff.

Manders. It's quite beyond my comprehension. Besides, it's never been my habit to snuff candles with my fingers.

Engstrand. And very bad it looked, that it did! But is there so much harm done after all, your Reverence?

Manders [*walks restlessly to and fro*]. Oh! don't ask me.

Engstrand [*walks with him*]. And your Reverence hadn't insured it, neither?

Manders [*continuing to walk up and down*]. No, no, no; you've heard that already.

Engstrand [*following him*]. Not insured! And then to go right down and set light to the whole thing. Lord! Lord! what a misfortune!

Manders [*wipes the sweat from his forehead*]. Ay, you may well say that, Engstrand.

Engstrand. And to think that such a thing should happen to a benevolent Institution, that was to have been a blessing both to town and country, as the saying is! The newspapers won't handle your Reverence very gently, I expect.

Manders. No; that's just what I'm thinking of. That's almost the worst of it. All the hateful attacks and accusations! Oh! it's terrible only to imagine it.

Mrs. Alving [*comes in from the garden*]. He can't be got away from the fire.

Manders. Ah! there you are, Mrs. Alving!

Mrs. Alving. So you've got off your Inaugural Address, Pastor Manders.

Manders. Oh! I should so gladly——

Mrs. Alving [*in an undertone*]. It is all for the best. That Orphanage would have done no good to anybody.

Manders. Do you think not?

Mrs. Alving. Do you think it would?

Manders. It's an immense pity, all the same.

Mrs. Alving. Let us speak plainly of it, as a piece of business. Are you waiting for Mr. Manders, Engstrand?

Engstrand [*at the hall door*]. Ay, Ma'am; indeed I am.

Mrs. Alving. Then sit down meanwhile.

Engstrand. Thank you, Ma'am; I'd rather stand.

Mrs. Alving [*to* MANDERS]. I suppose you're going away by the steamer?

Manders. Yes, it starts in an hour.

Mrs. Alving. Be so good as to take all the papers with you. I won't hear another word about that affair. I have got other things to think about.

Manders. Mrs. Alving——

Mrs. Alving. Later on I shall send you a Power of Attorney to settle everything as you please.

Manders. That I shall very readily take upon myself. The orginal destination of the gift must now be completely changed, alas!

Mrs. Alving. Of course it must.

Manders. Well, I think, first of all, I shall arrange that the Solvik property shall pass to the parish. The land is by no means without value. It can always be turned to account for some purpose or other. And the interest of the money in the Bank I could, perhaps, best apply for the benefit of some undertaking that has proved itself a blessing to the town.

Mrs. Alving. Do exactly as you please. The whole matter is now completely indifferent to me.

Engstrand. Give a thought to my Sailors' Home, your Reverence.

Manders. Yes, that's not a bad suggestion. That must be considered.

Engstrand. Oh, devil take considering—I beg your pardon!

Manders [*with a sigh*]. And I'm sorry to say I don't know how long I shall be able to retain control of these things—whether public opinion may not compel me to retire. It entirely depends upon the result of the official enquiry into the fire——

Mrs. Alving. What are you talking about?

Manders. And the result can by no means be foretold.

Engstrand [*comes close to him*]. Ay, but it can though. For here stands Jacob Engstrand.

Manders. Well, well, but——?

Engstrand [*more softly*]. And Jacob Engstrand isn't the man to desert a noble benefactor in the hour of need, as the saying is.

Manders. Yes, but my good fellow—how——?

Engstrand. Jacob Engstrand may be likened to a guardian angel, he may, your Reverence.

Manders. No, no; I can't accept that.

Engstrand. Oh! you will though, all the same. I know a man that's taken others' sins upon himself before now, I do.

Manders. Jacob! [*wrings his hand.*] you are a rare character. Well, you shall be helped with your Sailors' Home. That you may rely upon. [ENGSTRAND *tries to thank him, but cannot, for emotion.* MR. MANDERS *hangs his travelling bag over his shoulder.*] And now let's be off. We two go together.

Engstrand [*at the dining-room door, softly to* REGINA]. You come along too, girl. You shall live as snug as the yolk in an egg.

Regina [*tosses her head*]. *Merci!*

[*She goes out into the hall and fetches* MANDERS'S *overcoat.*]

Manders. Good-bye, Mrs. Alving! and may the spirit of

Law and Order descend upon this house, and that quickly.

Mrs. Alving. Good-bye, Manders.

[*She goes up towards the conservatory, as she sees* OSWALD *coming in through the garden door.*]

Engstrand [*while he and* REGINA *help* MANDERS *to get his coat on*]. Good-bye, my child. And if any trouble should come to you, you know where Jacob Engstrand is to be found. [*Softly.*] Little Harbour Street. Hm! [*To* MRS. ALVING *and* OSWALD.] And the refuge for wandering mariners shall be called "Captain Alving's Home," that it shall! And if I'm spared to carry on that house in my own way, I venture to promise that it shall be worthy of his memory.

Manders [*in the doorway*]. Hm—Hm.—Now come, my dear Engstrand. Good-bye! Good-bye!

[*He and* ENGSTRAND *go out through the hall.*]

Oswald [*walks towards the table*]. What house was he talking about?

Mrs. Alving. Oh! I suppose it was a kind of Home that he and Manders want to set up.

Oswald. It will burn down like the other.

Mrs. Alving. What makes you think so?

Oswald. Everything will burn. There won't remain a single thing in memory of Father. Here am I, too, burning down.

[REGINA *starts and looks at him.*]

Mrs. Alving. Oswald! you ought not to have remained so long down there, my poor boy!

Oswald [*sits down by the table*]. I almost think you are right.

Mrs. Alving. Let me dry your face, Oswald; you are quite wet.

[*She dries him with her pocket-handkerchief.*]

Oswald [*stares indifferently in front of him*]. Thanks, Mother.

Mrs. Alving. Are you not tired, Oswald? Would you like to go to sleep?

Oswald [*nervously*]. No, no—I can't sleep. I never sleep. I only pretend to. [*Sadly.*] That will come soon enough.

Mrs. Alving [*looking sorrowfully at him*]. Yes! you really are ill, my blessed boy.

Regina [*eagerly.*] Is Mr. Alving ill?

Oswald [*impatiently.*] Oh! do shut all the doors! This deadly fear. . . .

Mrs. Alving. Shut the doors, Regina.

[REGINA *shuts them and remains standing by the hall door.* MRS. ALVING *takes her shawl off.* REGINA *does the same.* MRS. ALVING *draws a chair across to* OSWALD'S, *and sits by him.*]

Mrs. Alving. There! now; I am going to sit beside you——

Oswald. Ah! do. And Regina shall stay here, too. Regina shall always be with me. You'll come to the rescue, Regina, won't you?

Regina. I don't understand——

Mrs. Alving. To the rescue?

Oswald. Yes, in the hour of need.

Mrs. Alving. Oswald, have you not your Mother to come to the rescue?

Oswald. You? [*Smiles.*] No, Mother; *that* rescue you

will never bring me. [*Laughs sadly.*] You! ha! ha! [*Looks earnestly at her.*] Though, after all, it lies nearest to you. [*Impetuously.*] Why don't you say* "thou" to me, Regina? Why don't you call me "Oswald"?

Regina [*softly*]. I don't think Mrs. Alving would like it.

Mrs. Alving. You shall soon have leave to do it. And sit over here beside us, won't you?

[REGINA *sits down quietly and hesitatingly on the other side of the table.*]

Mrs. Alving. And now, my poor suffering boy, I am going to take the burden off your mind——

Oswald. You, Mother?

Mrs. Alving. ——All the gnawing remorse and self-reproach.

Oswald. And you think you can do that?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, now I can, Oswald. You spoke of the joy of life; and at that word a new light burst for me over my life and all it has contained.

Oswald [*shakes his head*]. I don't understand what you are saying.

Mrs. Alving. You ought to have known your father when he was a young lieutenant. He was brimming over with the joy of life!

Oswald. Yes, I know he was.

Mrs. Alving. It was like a breezy day only to look at him. And what exuberant strength and vitality there was in him!

Oswald. Well?

Mrs. Alving. And then, child of joy as he was—for he *was* like a child at that time—he had to live here at home in a half-grown town, which had no joys to offer him, but

* "Sige du" = Fr. *tutoyer.*

only amusements. He had no object in life, but only an office. He had no work into which he could throw himself heart and soul; he had only business. He had not a single comrade that knew what the joy of life meant—only loungers and boon companions——

Oswald. Mother!

Mrs. Alving. So that happened which was sure to happen.

Oswald. And what was sure to happen?

Mrs. Alving. You said yourself, this evening, how it would go with you if you stayed at home.

Oswald. Do you mean to say that Father——?

Mrs. Alving. Your poor Father found no outlet for the overpowering joy of life that was in him. And I brought no brightness into his home.

Oswald. Not even you?

Mrs. Alving. They had taught me a lot about Duties and so on, which I had taken to be true. Everything was marked out into Duties—into my Duties and his Duties, and—I am afraid I made home intolerable for your poor Father, Oswald.

Oswald. Why did you never write me anything about all this?

Mrs. Alving. I have never before seen it in such a light that I could speak of it to you, his son.

Oswald. In what light did you see it then?

Mrs. Alving [*slowly*]. I saw only this one thing, that your Father was a broken-down man before you were born.

Oswald. [*softly*]. Ah!

[*He rises and walks away to the window.*]

Mrs. Alving. And then, day after day, I dwelt on the one thought that by rights Regina belonged here in the house—just like my own boy.

Oswald [*turning round quickly*]. Regina!

Regina [*springs up and asks, with bated breath:*] I?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, now you know it, both of you.

Oswald. Regina!

Regina [*to herself*]. So Mother was that kind of woman, after all.

Mrs. Alving. Your Mother had many good qualities, Regina.

Regina. Yes, but she was one of that sort, all the same. Oh! I've often suspected it; but—— And now, if you please, Ma'am, may I be allowed to go away at once?

Mrs. Alving. Do you really wish it, Regina?

Regina. Yes, indeed I do.

Mrs. Alving. Of course you can do as you like; but——

Oswald [*goes towards Regina*]. Go away now? Now that you belong here?

Regina. Merci, Mr. Alving!—or now, I suppose, I may say Oswald. But I can tell you this wasn't what I expected.

Mrs. Alving. Regina, I have not been frank with you . . .

Regina. No, that you haven't, indeed. If I'd known that Oswald was ill, why . . . And now, too, that it can never come to anything serious between us . . . Oh! I really can't stop out here in the country and wear myself out nursing sick people.

Oswald. Not even one who is so near to you?

Regina. No, that I can't. A poor girl must make the best of her young days, or she'll be left out in the cold before she knows where she is. And I, too, want to enjoy my life, Mrs. Alving.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, I see you do. But don't throw yourself away, Regina.

Regina. Oh! what must be, must be. If Oswald takes after his father, I take after my mother, I daresay. May I ask, Ma'am, if Mr. Manders knows all this about me?

Mrs. Alving. Mr. Manders knows all about it.

Regina [*puts on her shawl hastily*]. Well, then, I'd better make haste and get away by this steamer. Pastor Manders is so nice to deal with; and I certainly think I've as much right to a little of that money as he has—that brute of a carpenter.

Mrs. Alving. You are heartily welcome to it, Regina.

Regina [*looks hard at her*]. I think you might have brought me up as a gentleman's daughter, Ma'am; it would have suited me better. (*Tosses her head.*) But it's done now—it doesn't matter! (*With a bitter side glance at the corked bottle.*) All the same, I may come to drink champagne with gentlefolks yet.

Mrs. Alving. And if you ever need a home, Regina, come to me.

Regina. No, thank you, Ma'am. Mr. Manders will look after me, I know. And if the worst comes to the worst, I know of one house where I'll certainly be at home.

Mrs. Alving. Where is that?

Regina. "Captain Alving's Home."

Mrs. Alving. Regina—now I see it—you're going to your ruin.

Regina. Oh, stuff! Good-bye.

[*She nods and goes out through the hall.*]

Oswald [*stands at the window and looks out*]. Is she gone?

Mrs. Alving. Yes.

Oswald [*murmuring aside to himself*]. I think it was wrong, all this.

Mrs. Alving [*goes behind him and lays her hands on his shoulders*]. Oswald, my dear boy; has it shaken you very much?

Oswald [*turns his face towards her*]. All that about Father, do you mean?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, about your unhappy Father. I'm so afraid it may have been too much for you.

Oswald. Why should you fancy that? Of course it came upon me as a great surprise, but, after all, it can't matter much to me.

Mrs. Alving [*draws her hands away*]. Can't matter! That your Father was so infinitely miserable!

Oswald. Of course I can feel sympathy for him as I could for anybody else; but——

Mrs. Alving. Nothing more? For your own Father!

Oswald [*impatiently*]. Oh, there! "Father," "Father"! I never knew anything of Father. I don't remember anything about him except—that he once made me sick.

Mrs. Alving. That's a terrible way to speak! Should not a son love his Father, all the same?

Oswald. When a son has nothing to thank his Father for? has never known him? Do you really cling to the old superstition?—you who are so enlightened in other ways?

Mrs. Alving. Is that only a superstition?

Oswald. Yes; can't you see it, Mother? It is one of those notions that are current in the world, and so——

Mrs. Alving [*deeply moved*]. Ghosts!

Oswald [*crossing the room*]. Yes; you may well call them Ghosts.

Mrs. Alving [*wildly*]. Oswald! then you don't love me, either!

Oswald. You I know, at any rate.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, you know me; but is that all?

Oswald. And of course I know how fond you are of

me, and I can't but be grateful to you. And you can be so very useful to me, now that I am ill.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, can't I, Oswald? Oh! I could almost bless your illness which drove you home to me. For I can see very plainly you are not mine; I have to win you.

Oswald [*impatiently*]. Yes, yes, yes; all these are just so many phrases. You must recollect I am a sick man, Mother. I can't be much taken up with other people; I have enough to do thinking about myself.

Mrs. Alving [*in a low voice*]. I shall be easily satisfied and patient.

Oswald. And cheerful too, Mother.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, my dear boy, you are quite right. [*Goes towards him.*] Have I relieved you of all remorse and self-reproach now?

Oswald. Yes; you have done that. But who is to relieve me of the fear?

Mrs. Alving. The fear?

Oswald [*walks across the room*]. Regina could have been got to do it.

Mrs. Alving. I don't understand you. What is all this about fear—and Regina?

Oswald. Is it very late, Mother?

Mrs. Alving. It is early morning. [*She looks out through the conservatory.*] The day is dawning over the hills; and the weather is fine, Oswald. In a little while you shall see the sun.

Oswald. I'm glad of that. Oh! there may be much for me to rejoice in and live for——

Mrs. Alving. Yes, much—much, indeed!

Oswald. Even if I can't work——

Mrs. Alving. Oh! you will soon be able to work again,

my dear boy, now that you have no longer got all those gnawing and depressing thoughts to brood over.

Oswald. Yes, I am glad you were able to free me from all those fancies; and when I've got one thing more arranged—— [*Sits on the sofa.*] Now we will have a little talk, Mother.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, let us.

[*She pushes an arm-chair towards the sofa, and sits down close to him.*]

Oswald. And meantime the sun will be rising. And then you will know all. And then I shan't have that fear any longer.

Mrs. Alving. What am I to know?

Oswald [*not listening to her*]. Mother, didn't you say, a little while ago, that there was nothing in the world you would not do for me, if I asked you.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, to be sure I said it.

Oswald. And you'll stick to it, Mother?

Mrs. Alving. You may rely on that, my dear and only boy! I have nothing in the world to live for but you alone.

Oswald. All right, then; now you shall hear. Mother, you have a strong, steadfast mind, I know. Now you are to sit quite still when you hear it.

Mrs. Alving. What dreadful thing can it be——?

Oswald. You are not to scream out. Do you hear? Do you promise me that? We'll sit and talk about it quite quietly. Do you promise me this, mother?

Mrs. Alving. Yes, yes; I promise you that. Only speak!

Oswald. Well, you must know that all this fatigue, and this of my not being able to think of working at all—all that is not the illness itself——

Mrs. Alving. Then what is the illness itself?

Oswald. The disease I have as my birthright [*he points to his forehead and adds very softly*]—is seated here.

Mrs. Alving [*almost voiceless*]. Oswald! No, no!

Oswald. Don't scream. I can't bear it. Yes, it is sitting here—waiting. And it may break out any day—at any moment.

Mrs. Alving. Oh! what horror!

Oswald. Now, do be quiet. That's how it stands with me——

Mrs. Alving [*jumps up*]. It is not true, Oswald. It is impossible. It can't be so.

Oswald. I have had one attack down there already. It was soon over. But when I got to know what had been the matter with me, then the fear came upon me raging and tearing; and so I set off home to you as fast as I could.

Mrs. Alving. Then this is the fear——!

Oswald. Yes, for it's so indescribably awful, you know. Oh! if it had been merely an ordinary mortal disease! For I'm not so afraid of death—though I should like to live as long as I can.

Mrs. Alving. Yes, yes, Oswald, you must.

Oswald. But this is so unspeakably loathsome! To become a little baby again! To have to be fed! To have to—— Oh! it is past telling!

Mrs. Alving. The child has his mother to nurse him.

Oswald [*jumps up*]. No, never; that's just what I won't have. I can't endure to think that perhaps I should lie in that state for many years—get old and grey. And in the meantime you might die and leave me. [*Sits in* MRS. ALVING'S *chair.*] For the doctor said it would not necessarily prove fatal at once. He called it a sort of softening of the brain—or something of the kind. [*Smiles sadly.*] I think that expression sounds so nice. It always

sets me thinking of cherry-coloured velvet—something soft and delicate to stroke.

Mrs. Alving [*screams*]. Oswald!

Oswald. [*springs up and paces the room*]. And now you have taken Regina from me. If I'd only had her! She would have come to the rescue, I know.

Mrs. Alving [*goes to him*]. What do you mean by that, my darling boy? Is there any help in the world that I wouldn't give you?

Oswald. When I got over my attack in Paris, the doctor told me that when it came again—and it will come again—there would be no more hope.

Mrs. Alving. He was heartless enough——

Oswald. I demanded it of him. I told him I had preparations to make. [*He smiles cunningly.*] And so I had. [*He takes a little box from his inner breast pocket and opens it.*] Mother, do you see these?

Mrs. Alving. What is that?

Oswald. Morphia powder.

Mrs. Alving (*looks horrified at him*). Oswald—my boy?

Oswald. I have scraped together twelve pilules——

Mrs. Alving (*snatches at it*). Give me the box, Oswald.

Oswald. Not yet, mother.

[*He hides the box again in his pocket.*]

Mrs. Alving. I shall never survive this.

Oswald. It must be survived. Now if I had Regina here, I should have told her how it stood with me, and begged her to come to the rescue at the last. She would have done it. I'm certain she would.

Mrs. Alving. Never!

Oswald. When the horror had come upon me, and she saw me lying there helpless, like a little new-born baby, impotent, lost, hopeless, past all saving——

Mrs. Alving. Never in all the world would Regina have done this.

Oswald. Regina would have done it. Regina was so splendidly light-hearted. And she would soon have wearied of nursing an invalid like me——

Mrs. Alving. Then Heaven be praised that Regina is not here.

Oswald. Well, then, it is you that must come to the rescue, mother.

Mrs. Alving (*screams aloud*). I!

Oswald. Who is nearer to it than you?

Mrs. Alving. I! your mother!

Oswald. For that very reason.

Mrs. Alving. I, who gave you life!

Oswald. I never asked you for life. And what sort of a life is it that you have given me? I will not have it. You shall take it back again.

Mrs. Alving. Help! help! [*She runs out into the hall.*]

Oswald [*going after her*]. Don't leave me. Where are you going?

Mrs. Alving [*in the hall*]. To fetch the doctor, Oswald. Let me go.

Oswald [*also outside*]. You shall not go. And no one shall come in. [*The locking of a door is heard.*]

Mrs. Alving [*comes in again*]. Oswald—Oswald!—my child!

Oswald [*follows her*]. Have you a mother's heart for me, and yet can see me suffer from this unutterable fear?

Mrs. Alving [*after a moment's silence, commands herself, and says:*] Here is my hand upon it.

Oswald. Will you——?

Mrs. Alving. If it is ever necessary. But it will never be necessary. No, no; it is impossible.

Oswald. Well, let us hope so, and let us live together as long as we can. Thank you, Mother.

[*He sits down in the arm-chair which* MRS. ALVING *has moved to the sofa. Day is breaking. The lamp is still burning on the table.*]

Mrs. Alving [*drawing near cautiously*]. Do you feel calm, now?

Oswald. Yes.

Mrs. Alving [*bending over him*]. It has been a dreadful fancy of yours, Oswald—nothing but a fancy. You have not been able to bear all this excitement. But now you shall have a long rest; at home with your own mother, my own blessed boy. Everything you point to you shall have, just as when you were a little child. There now! That crisis is over now. You see how easily it passed. Oh! I was sure it would—— And do you see, Oswald, what a lovely day we are going to have? Brilliant sunshine! Now you will really be able to see your home.

[*She goes to the table and puts the lamp out. Sunrise. The glacier and the snow-peaks in the background glow in the morning light.*]

Oswald [*sits in the arm-chair with his back towards the landscape, without moving. Suddenly he says:*] Mother, give me the sun.

Mrs. Alving [*by the table, starts and looks at him*]. What do you say?

Oswald [*repeats, in a dull toneless voice:*] The sun. The sun.

Mrs. Alving [*goes to him*]. Oswald, what is the matter with you? [*Oswald seems to shrink together in the chair; all his muscles relax; his face is expressionless, his eyes have a*

glassy stare. MRS. ALVING *is quivering with terror*]. What is this? [*shrieks.*] Oswald, what is the matter with you? [*Falls on her knees beside him and shakes him*]. Oswald, Oswald! look at me! Don't you know me?

Oswald [*tonelessly as before*]. The sun. The sun.

Mrs. Alving [*springs up in despair, intwines her hands in her hair and shrieks*]. I can't bear it [*whispers as though petrified*] I can't bear it! Never! [*Suddenly.*] Where has he got them? [*Fumbles hastily in his breast.*] Here! [*Shrinks back a few steps and screams.*] No, no, no! Yes!—No, no!

[*She stands a few steps from him with her hands twisted in her hair, and stares at him in speechless terror.*]

Oswald [*sits motionless as before and says:*] The sun The sun.

AN ENEMY OF SOCIETY.*

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS.

* For the title of this play—*En Folkefiende*, literally "a folk-enemy," or "an enemy of the people,"—no exact idiomatic equivalent can be found in English. "An Enemy of Society" has seemed the most satisfactory rendering available.

CHARACTERS.

DOCTOR THOMAS STOCKMANN, *medical officer of the Baths.*
MRS. STOCKMANN, *his wife.*
PETRA, *their daughter, a teacher.*
EJLIF, MORTEN, } *their sons, boys of thirteen.*
PETER STOCKMANN, *the doctor's elder brother, burgomaster and prefect of police, chairman of the board of directors, etc.*
MORTEN KIIL, *master tanner, Mrs. Stockmann's foster-father.*
HOVSTAD, *editor of the "People's Messenger."*
BILLING, *on the staff.*
HORSTER, *a ship's captain.*
ASLAKSEN, *a printer.*

Townsfolk present at the meeting; all sorts and conditions of men, some women, and a crowd of school-boys.

SCENE: *A town on the South Coast of Norway.*

AN ENEMY OF SOCIETY.

ACT I.

Evening. DR. STOCKMANN'S *sitting-room; with simple but cheerful furniture and decorations. In the wall to the right are two doors, the first leading to the Doctor's study, the second to an ante-room. In the opposite wall, facing the ante-room door, a door leading to the other rooms. Near the middle of this wall stands the stove, and further towards the foreground a sofa, with looking-glass above it, and in front of it an oval table with a cover. On the table a lighted lamp, with a shade. In the back wall an open door leading to the dining-room. In the latter is seen a dinner-table, with a lamp on it.* BILLING *is seated at the table, a serviette under his chin.* MRS. STOCKMANN *stands by the table and hands him a great plate of roast beef. The other seats round the table are empty; the table is in some disorder, as at the end of a meal.*

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, if you're an hour late, Mr. Billing, you must put up with a cold supper.

Billing [*eating*]. That's excellent, delicious!

Mrs. Stockmann. You know how Stockmann keeps to regular meal hours——

Billing. It's all right. Indeed, I think it tastes better when I can sit down like this and eat all by myself, and undisturbed.

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, if you are satisfied I—— [*Listening by door of ante-room.*] Surely there's Hovstad coming too!

Billing. Very likely.

[*Enter* BURGOMASTER STOCKMANN, *wearing an overcoat and an official gold-laced cap, and carrying a stick.*]

Burgomaster. Good evening, sister-in-law.

Mrs. Stockmann [*coming into the sitting-room*]. What, you! Good evening. It is very nice of you to look in.

Burgomaster. I was just passing, and so—— [*Looks towards dining-room.*] Ah! I see you've still got company.

Mrs. Stockmann [*rather awkwardly*]. Oh, no! Not at all; it is quite by chance. [*Hurriedly.*] Won't you come in and have something?

Burgomaster. I? No, thanks. God forbid I should eat anything hot in the evening; that wouldn't suit *my* digestion.

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh! just this once——

Burgomaster. No, no. Much obliged to you. I stick to tea and bread and butter. That's more wholesome in the long run—and rather more economical, too.

Mrs. Stockmann [*smiling*]. Now, you mustn't think Thomas and I are mere spendthrifts.

Burgomaster. You're not, sister-in-law; far be it from me to say that. [*Pointing to Doctor's study.*] Perhaps he's not at home?

Mrs. Stockmann. No, he's gone for a short stroll after supper—with the boys.

Burgomaster. Good gracious! Is that healthy? [*Listening.*] There he is.

Mrs. Stockmann. No, that's not he. [*A knock.*] Come in [*Enter* HOVSTAD, *the editor, from the ante-room.*] Ah! it's Mr. Hovstad, who——

Hovstad. Yes, you must excuse me, but I was delayed at the printer's. Good evening, Burgomaster.

Burgomaster [*bowing rather stiffly*]. Mr. Hovstad! I suppose you've come on business?

Hovstad. Partly. About something for the paper.

Burgomaster. So I supposed. I hear my brother is an extremely prolific contributor to the *People's Messenger.*

Hovstad. Yes, he writes for the *Messenger* when he has some truths to speak upon one thing or another.

Mrs. Stockmann [*to Hovstad*]. But wont you——?

[*Points to dining-room.*]

Burgomaster. God forbid I should blame him for writing for the class of readers from whom he expects most appreciation. And, personally, I've no reason to bear your paper any ill-will, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. No, I should think not.

Burgomaster. On the whole, there's a great deal of toleration in this town. There's much public spirit here. And that because we have one common interest which unites us all in one undertaking that equally concerns all right-thinking citizens.

Hovstad. Yes—the Baths.

Burgomaster. Just so. We have our magnificent new Baths. Yes! The Baths will be the centre of life in this town, Mr. Hovstad, without doubt.

Mrs. Stockmann. That's just what Thomas says.

Burgomaster. How extraordinary the development of our town has been even within the last few years. Money has circulated among the people, there is life and movement. Houses and ground-rents have risen in value.

Hovstad. And the difficulty of getting work is decreasing

Burgomaster. And the poor-rates have been most satisfactorily lessened for the possessing class, and will be still

further reduced if only we have a really fine summer this year—and plenty of visitors—lots of invalids, who'll give the Baths a reputation.

Hovstad. And I hear there's every prospect of that.

Burgomaster. Things look most promising. Every day inquiries about apartments and so forth come flowing in.

Hovstad. Then the doctor's essay is very opportune.

Burgomaster. Has he been writing something again?

Hovstad. It's something he wrote in the winter; recommending the Baths, and describing the advantageous sanitary conditions of our town. But at the time I didn't use it.

Burgomaster. Ha! I suppose there was some little hitch!

Hovstad. Not at all. But I thought it would be better to wait till the spring, for people are beginning to get ready now for their summer holidays.

Burgomaster. You're right, quite right, Mr. Hovstad.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, Thomas is really indefatigable where the Baths are concerned.

Burgomaster. Why, of course, he's one of the staff.

Hovstad. Yes, he was really their creator.

Burgomaster. Was he? I occasionally hear that certain persons are of that opinion. But I should say I too have a modest share in that undertaking.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, that's what Thomas is always saying.

Hovstad. Who wants to deny it, Burgomaster? You set the thing going, and put it on a practical footing. Everybody knows that I only meant that the idea originally was the doctor's.

Burgomaster. Yes, certainly my brother has had ideas in his time—worse luck! But when anything is to be set going, we want men of another stamp, Mr. Hovstad. And I should have expected that in this house at least——

Mrs. Stockmann. But, my dear brother-in-law——

Hovstad. Burgomaster, how can you——

Mrs. Stockmann. Do come in and take something, Mr. Hovstad; my husband is sure to be in directly.

Hovstad. Thanks; just a mouthful, perhaps.

[*He goes into the dining-room.*]

Burgomaster [*speaking in a low voice*]. It's extraordinary that people who spring directly from the peasant-class never get rid of a want of tact.

Mrs. Stockmann. But why should you care? Can't you and Thomas share the honour as brothers?

Burgomaster. Yes, one would suppose so; but it seems a share of the honour isn't enough for some persons.

Mrs. Stockmann. How ridiculous! You and Thomas always get on so well together. [*Listening.*] There, I think I hear him. [*Goes to the door of the ante-room.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*laughing without*]. Here's a visitor for you, Katrine. Isn't it jolly here? Come in, Captain Horster. Hang your coat up there. Oh! you don't even wear an overcoat? Fancy, Katrine, I caught him in the street, and I could hardly get him to come along. [CAPTAIN HORSTER *enters and bows to* MRS. STOCKMANN. *The Doctor is by the door.*] In with you, boys. They're famished again! Come on, Captain; you must have some of our beef.

[*He forces* HORSTER *into the dining-room.* EJLIF *and* MORTEN *also join.*]

Mrs. Stockmann. But, Thomas, haven't you seen——

Dr. Stockmann [*turning round in the doorway*]. Oh! is that you, Peter? [*Goes up to him and holds out his hand.*] Now, this is splendid.

Burgomaster. Unfortunately, I must be off directly——

Dr. Stockmann. Nonsense! We'll have some toddy in a minute. You haven't forgotten the toddy, Katrine?

Mrs. Stockmann. Of course not, the water's boiling.

[*She goes into the dining-room.*]

Burgomaster. Toddy, too——!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes; sit down, and you'll see how cosy we shall be.

Burgomaster. Thanks; I never join in a drinking-bout.

Dr. Stockmann. But this isn't a drinking-bout.

Burgomaster. It seems to me—— [*Looks towards the dining-room.*] It's wonderful how they can get through all that food.

Dr. Stockmann [*rubbing his hands*]. Yes, doesn't it do one good to see young people eat? Always hungry! They must eat! They need strength! It's they who have to stir up the ferment for the after-time, Peter.

Burgomaster. May I ask what there is to be "stirred up," as you call it?

Dr. Stockmann. Well, you'll have to ask the young people that when the time comes. *We* shall not see it, of course. Two old fogies like us——

Burgomaster. There, there. Surely that's a very extraordinary expression to use——

Dr. Stockmann. Ah! you mustn't mind what I say, Peter. For you must know I am so glad and content. I feel so unspeakably happy in the midst of all this growing, germinating life. After all, what a glorious time we do live in. It is as if a new world were springing up around us.

Burgomaster. Do you really think so?

Dr. Stockmann. Well, of course, you can't see this as clearly as I do. You've spent all your life in this place, and so your perceptions have been dulled. But I, who had to live up there in that small hole in the north all those years, hardly ever seeing a soul to speak a stimulating

word to me—all this affects me as if I were carried to the midst of a crowded city——

Burgomaster. Hm! City——

Dr. Stockmann. Oh! I know well enough that the conditions of life are small enough compared with many other towns. But here is life—growth, an infinity of things to work for and to strive for; and that is the main point. [*Calling.*] Katrine, haven't there been any letters?

Mrs. Stockmann [*in the dining-room*]. No, none at all.

Dr. Stockmann. And then, the comfortable income, Peter! That's something a man learns to appreciate when he has starved as we have——

Burgomaster. Good heavens!——

Dr. Stockmann. Oh yes! you can imagine that we were hard put to it up there. And now we can live like lords! To-day, for example, we had roast beef for dinner, and what's more, we've had some for supper too. Won't you have some! Come along—just look at it, anyhow.

Burgomaster. No, no; certainly not.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, then, look here. Do you see that fine tablecloth?

Burgomaster. Yes, I've noticed it already.

Dr. Stockmann. And we've some nice lamps too. Do you see? Katrine has bought them all out of her savings. And it all helps to make a house so home-like. Doesn't it? Come over here. No, no, no, not there! So—yes—do you see how the light streams down—I do really think it looks very nice. Eh?

Burgomaster. Yes, when one can afford such luxuries.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh! yes, I can afford it now. Katrine says I earn nearly as much as we spend.

Burgomaster. Yes—nearly!

Dr. Stockmann. Besides, a man of science must live in

some style. I'm certain a sheriff* spends much more a-year than I do.

Burgomaster. Yes, I daresay! A member of the superior magistracy!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, even a mere merchant! Such a fellow spends many times as much.

Burgomaster. Well, that is unavoidable in his position.

Dr. Stockmann. For the rest, I really don't spend anything unnecessarily, Peter. But I can't deny myself the delight of having people about me. I must have them. I, so long isolated, it is a necessity of life for me to see the young, brave, determined, free-thinking, strenuous men gathered around me—and that they are, all of them, sitting there and eating so heartily. I should like you to know more of Hovstad——

Burgomaster. Ah, Hovstad! He was telling me that he he is going to give another essay of yours.

Dr. Stockmann. An essay of mine?

Burgomaster. Yes, about the Baths. An article written in the winter——

Dr. Stockmann. Oh! that one—yes. But I don't want that to appear just now.

Burgomaster. Why not? This is the very time for it.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, you may be right, under ordinary circumstances—— [*Crosses the room.*]

Burgomaster [*looking after him*]. And what's unusual in the circumstances now?

Dr. Stockmann [*standing still*]. Peter, I can't tell you yet—not this evening, at all events. The circumstances may turn out to be very unusual. On the other hand, there may be nothing at all. Very likely its only my fancy.

* *Amtmand*, the chief government official of an *Amt* or county; consequently a high dignitary in the bureaucratic hierarchy.

Burgomaster. Upon my word, you're very enigmatical. Is there anything in the wind? Anything I'm to be kept in the dark about? I should think that I, who am Chairman——

Dr. Stockmann. And I should think that I—— There! don't let's tear one another's hair, Peter.

Burgomaster. God forbid! I am not in the habit of "tearing hair," as you express it. But I must absolutely insist that everything concerning the Baths shall be carried on in a business-like manner, and under proper authority. I can't consent to the following of devious and underhand ways.

Dr. Stockmann. And am I in the habit of following devious and underhand ways?

Burgomaster. Anyhow, you've an ingrained propensity for going your own way. And that in a well-ordered community is almost as dangerous. The individual must submit himself to the whole community, or, to speak more correctly, bow to the authority that watches over the welfare of all.

Dr. Stockmann Maybe. But what the devil has that to do with me?

Burgomaster. Well, it's just this, my dear Thomas, that it seems you won't learn. But take care; you'll have to pay for it one of these days. Now, I've warned you. Good-bye.

Dr. Stockmann. Are you quite mad? You're altogether on the wrong tack.

Burgomaster. I'm not in the habit of being *that.* And I must beg that you will—— [*Bowing towards dining-room.*] Good-bye, sister-in-law; good-bye, gentlemen. [*Exit*].

Mrs. Stockmann [*entering the room*]. Is he gone?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and in an awful rage, too.

Mrs. Stockmann. But, dear Thomas, now what have you been up to again?

Dr. Stockmann. Nothing at all. Surely he can't expect me to account for everything—beforehand.

Mrs. Stockmann. And what are you to account to him for?

Dr. Stockmann. Hm! Never mind about that, Katrine. It's very odd that there are no letters.

[HOVSTAD, BILLING, *and* HORSTER *have risen from table and come into the room.* EJLIF *and* MORTEN *enter soon after.*]

Billings [*stretching his arm*]. Ah! God bless me! After a good meal one feels a new man.

Hovstad. The Burgomaster didn't seem in the best of tempers to-day.

Dr. Stockmann. That's his stomach. He has a very poor digestion.

Hovstad. It's more especially us of the *Messenger* that he can't stomach.

Mrs. Stockmann. I thought you got on with him well enough.

Hovstad. Oh, yes! But now we've only a truce.

Billing. That's so. That word quite sums up the situation.

Dr. Stockmann. We must bear in mind that Peter is a bachelor, poor devil! He has no home to be happy in, only business, business. And then that cursed weak tea, that's about all he takes. Now, then, put chairs round the table, boys! Katrine, aren't we to have that punch soon?

Mrs. Stockmann [*going towards dining-room*]. I'm just getting it.

Dr. Stockmann. And you, Captain Horster, sit down by me on the sofa. So rare a guest as you—— Be seated, gentlemen.

[*The men sit round the table*, Mrs. STOCKMANN *brings in a tray with kettle, glasses, water-bottles, etc.*]

Mrs. Stockmann. There you are! Here's arrak, and this is rum, and this cognac. Now, help yourselves.

Dr. Stockmann [*taking a glass*]. So we will! [*While the toddy is being mixed.*] And now out with the cigars. Ejlif, you know where the box is. And you, Morten, may fetch my pipe. [*The boys go to the room right.*] I have a suspicion Ejlif cribs a cigar now and then, but I pretend not to notice it. [*Calls.*] And my skull-cap, Morten. Katrine, can't you tell him where I left it? Ah! he's got it. [*The boys bring in the things.*] Now, friends, help yourselves. You know I stick to my pipe;—this one has been on many a stormy journey with me up there in the north. [*They touch glasses.*] Your health! There's nothing like sitting here, warm and sheltered.

Mrs. Stockmann [*who sits knitting*]. When do you sail, Captain Horster?

Horster. I hope I shall have everything straight by next week.

Mrs. Stockmann. And you're going to America?

Horster. Yes, that's my intention.

Billing. But then you won't be able to take part in the election of the new council.

Horster. Is there to be a new election here?

Billing. Didn't you know?

Horster. No, I don't bother about things of that sort.

Billing. But I suppose you take an interest in public affairs.

Horster. No, I don't understand anything about them.

Billing. Still one ought to make use of one's vote.

Horster. Even those who don't understand anything about it?

Billing. Understand? Now, what do you mean by that? Society is like a ship; every man must help in the steering.

Horster. That may be all right on shore, but at sea it would not do at all.

Hovstad. It is very remarkable how little most seafaring folk care about public matters.

Billing. Most extraordinary.

Dr. Stockmann. Seafaring folk are like birds of passage; they feel at home both in the south and in the north. So the rest of us have to be all the more energetic, Mr. Hovstad. Will there be anything of public interest in the *People's Messenger* to-morrow?

Hovstad. Nothing of local interest. But the day after to-morrow I'm thinking of using your paper——

Dr. Stockmann. Yes—d—n it all, I say, you'll have to hold that over.

Hovstad. Really? And we'd just got room for it. I should say, too, that this was the very time for it——

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, yes, you may be right, but you'll have to hold it over all the same. I'll explain to you by-and-by——

[PETRA *enters with hat and cloak on, with a number of exercise books under her arm. She comes in from the ante-room.*]

Petra. Good evening!

Dr. Stockmann. Good evening, Petra! Is that you?

[*They all bow.* PETRA *puts cloak and books on a chair by the door.*]

Petra. Here you all are, enjoying yourselves, while I've been out slaving!

Dr. Stockmann. Well, then, you come and enjoy yourself too.

Billing. May I mix you a little——?

Petra [*coming towards the table*]. Thanks, I'll help myself—you always make it too strong. But, by-the-way, father, I've a letter for you.

[*Goes to the chair where her things are lying.*]

Dr. Stockmann. A letter! From whom?

Petra [*searching in the pocket of her cloak*]. I got it from the postman just as I was going out——

Dr. Stockmann [*rising and going towards her*]. And you only bring it me now?

Petra. I really hadn't time to run up again. Forgive me, father—here it is.

Dr. Stockmann [*taking letter*]. Let me see, let me see, child. [*Reads the address*]. Yes; all right!

Mrs. Stockmann. It is *the* one you've been expecting so, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, it is. Now, I must go to my room at once. Where shall I find a light, Katrine? Is there a lamp in the other room?

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes—the lamp is lit. It's on the writing-table.

Dr. Stockmann. Excuse me one moment.

[*He goes to room R. and closes door.*]

Petra. What can it be, mother?

Mrs. Stockmann. I don't know. For the last few days he has been always on the look-out for the postman.

Billing. Probably a country patient.

Petra. Poor father! He really works too hard. [*Mixes her toddy.*] Ah! that'll be good.

Hovstad. Have you been teaching in the night school as well to-day?

Petra [*sipping her glass*]. Two hours.

Billing. And in the morning four hours at the Institute——

Petra [*sitting down by table*]. Five hours.

Mrs. Stockmann. And I see you've some exercises to correct this evening.

Petra. Yes, quite a heap of them.

Horster. You've enough to do, it seems to me.

Petra. Yes; but that's a good thing. One is so delightfully tired after it.

Billing. Do you really think that?

Petra. Yes, for then one sleeps so well.

Morten. I say, Petra, you must be a very great sinner.

Petra. A sinner!

Morten. Yes, if you work so hard. Mr. Rörlund says work is a punishment for our sins.

Ejlif [*with a superior air*]. Bosh! You are a child to believe such stuff as that.

Mrs. Stockmann. Come, come, Ejlif.

Billing [*laughing*]. No! that's too rich!

Hovstad. Would you like to work so hard, Morten?

Morten. No, I shouldn't.

Hovstad. Yes; but what will you turn out then?

Morten. I should like to be a Viking.

Ejlif. But then you'd have to be a heathen.

Morten. Then I'd be a heathen.

Billing. There I agree with you, Morten. I say just the same.

Mrs. Stockmann [*making a sign to him*]. No, no, Mr. Billing, you don't.

Billing. God bless me! I should. I'm a heathen, and I'm proud of it. You'll see we shall all be heathens soon.

Morten. And shall we be able to do anything we like then?

Billing. Well, you see, Morten——

Mrs. Stockmann. Now, run away, boys; I'm sure you've some lessons to prepare for to-morrow.

Ejlif. I may stay just a little longer.

Mrs. Stockmann. No, not you either. Now be off, both of you.

[*The boys say good-night and go off by room L.*]

Hovstad. Do you think it does the boys any harm to hear these things?

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, I don't know; but I don't like it.

Petra. But, mother, I think that's ridiculous of you.

Mrs. Stockmann. Maybe! But I don't like it—here, at home.

Petra. There's so much falseness both at home and at school. At home you mustn't speak, and at school you have to stand there and lie to the children.

Horster. You have to lie?

Petra. Yes; don't you know that we have to teach many and many a thing we don't believe ourselves.

Billing. Yes, we know that well enough.

Petra. If only I could afford it I'd start a school myself, and things should be very different there.

Billing. Ah! as to means——

Horster. If you are really thinking of doing that, Miss Stockmann, I shall be delighted to let you have a room at my place. My big old house is nearly empty; there's a large dining-room on the ground floor——

Petra [*laughing*]. Yes, yes, thank you—but nothing will come of it.

Hovstad. Oh no! Miss Petra will yet come over to the journalists, I fancy. By-the-way, have you done anything at the English novel you promised to translate for us?——

Petra. Not yet. But you shall have it in good time.

[DR. STOCKMANN *enters from his room with the letter open in his hand.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*flourishing the letter*]. Here's some news, I think, will wake up the town!

Billing. News?

Mrs. Stockmann. What news?

Dr. Stockmann. A great discovery, Katrine.

Hovstad. What?

Mrs. Stockmann. Made by you?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes—by me! [*Walks up and down.*] Now, let them come as usual, and say these are fads and crack-brained fancies. But they'll not dare to. Ha! ha! I know they won't.

Petra. Father, do tell us what it is.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, well, give me time, and you shall hear all about it. If only Peter were here now! There, you see how we men can go about and form judgments like blind moles——

Hovstad. What do you mean, doctor?

Dr. Stockmann [*standing near table*]. Is it not the general opinion that the town is healthy?

Hovstad. Of course.

Dr. Stockmann. Indeed, a quite exceptionally healthy place, worthy to be recommended in the warmest manner to our fellow-men, both the sick and the whole——

Mrs. Stockmann. My dear Thomas——

Dr. Stockmann. And we've recommended and belauded it too. I have written again and again, both in the *Messenger* and in pamphlets——

Hovstad. Yes, and what then?

Dr. Stockmann. These Baths, that we have called the

pulse of the town, the living nerves of the town—and the devil knows what else——

Billing. "The town's palpitating heart"—it was thus that in one inspired moment I allowed myself to——

Dr. Stockmann. Ah, yes! that also! But do you know what in reality these mighty, magnificent, belauded Baths—that have cost so much money—do you know what they are?

Hovstad. No, what are they?

Mrs. Stockmann. Why, what are they?

Dr. Stockmann. The whole place is a pest-house.

Petra. The Baths, father?

Mrs. Stockmann [*at the same time*]. Our Baths!

Hovstad [*also at the same time*]. But, doctor——!

Billing. Oh! it's incredible.

Dr. Stockmann. The whole place, I tell you, is a whited sepulchre; noxious in the highest degree. All that filth up there in the mill dale, with its horrible stench, taints the water in the feed-pipes of the Baths; and the same d—d muck oozes out on the shore——

Hovstad. Where the sea Baths are?

Dr. Stockmann. There.

Hovstad. But how are you so certain of all this, doctor?

Dr. Stockmann. I have investigated the conditions as conscientiously as possible. This long time I have had my doubts about it. Last year we had some extraordinary cases of illness—both typhoid and gastric attacks——

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, I remember.

Dr. Stockmann. At the time we thought the visitors had brought the infection with them; but since—last winter—I came to another conclusion. So I set about examining the water as well as I could.

Mrs. Stockmann. It was this you were working so hard at!

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, you may well say I've worked, Katrine. But here, you know, I hadn't the necessary scientific appliances, so I sent both our drinking and sea-water to the university for an exact analysis by a chemist.

Hovstad. And you have now received it?

Dr. Stockmann [*shewing letter*]. Here it is. And it proves beyond dispute the presence of organic matter in the water—millions of infusoria. It is absolutely injurious to health whether used internally or externally.

Mrs. Stockmann. What a blessing you found it out in time.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, you may well say that.

Hovstad. And what do you intend to do now, doctor?

Dr. Stockmann. Why, set things right, of course.

Hovstad. Do you think that can be done?

Dr. Stockmann. It must be done. Else the whole Baths are useless, ruined. But there's no need for that. I'm quite clear as to what will have to be done.

Mrs. Stockmann. But, my dear Thomas, that you should have kept all this so secret!

Dr. Stockmann. Would you have had me rush all over the town and chatter about it before I was quite certain No, thanks! I'm not so mad as that.

Petra. But us at home——

Dr. Stockmann. Not one word to a living soul. But to morrow you may run in to the Badger.

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh! Thomas!——

Dr. Stockmann. Well, well, to your grandfather. He'll have something to wonder at now, the old fellow. He thinks I'm not all right in my head—yes, and there are plenty of others who think the same, I've noticed. But now the good folk will see—now they *will* see! [*Walks up and down rubbing his hands.*] What a stir

there'll be in the town, Katrine! You can't imagine what it will be! All the water-pipes will have to be re-laid.

Hovstad [*rising*]. All the water-pipes?

Dr. Stockmann. Why, of course. They've been laid too low down; they must be moved up to higher ground.

Petra. So, after all, you are right.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, do you remember, Petra? I wrote against it when they began building them. But then no one would listen to me. Now, be sure, I'll speak straight out, for, of course, I have written a report to the Directors. It has been lying there ready a whole week; I've only been waiting for this letter. [*Points to letter.*] But now they shall have it at once. [*Goes into his room and returns with a packet of papers.*] See! Four closely-written sheets. And the letter shall go too. A newspaper Katrine! Get me something to wrap them up in. There—that's it. Give it to——to—— [*Stamps.*] What the devil's her name? Well, give it to the girl, and tell her to take it at once to the Burgomaster.

[MRS. STOCKMANN *goes out with packet through the dining-room.*]

Petra. What do you think Uncle Peter will say, father?

Dr. Stockmann. What should he say? He'll be delighted that so important a fact has been discovered, I fancy.

Hovstad. I suppose you'll let me write a short notice about your discovery for the *Messenger*.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, I should be really obliged to you.

Hovstad. It is very desirable. The sooner the public know about it the better.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, so it is.

Mrs. Stockmann [*returning*]. She's gone with it.

Billing. God bless me, doctor, you're the greatest man in the town. — Building him up for a fall?

Dr. Stockmann [*walks up and down delightedly*]. Oh, bosh! Why, after all, I've done no more than my duty. I've been lucky in digging for treasures; that's all; but all the same——

Billing. Hovstad, don't you think the town ought to give Dr. Stockmann a torch-light procession?

Hovstad. I shall certainly see to it.

Billing. And I'll talk it over with Aslaksen.

Dr. Stockmann. No, dear friends. Let all such claptrap alone. I won't hear of anything of the sort. And if the directors want to give me a higher salary, I won't take it. I tell you, Katrine, I will not take it.

Mrs. Stockmann. And you will be right, Thomas.

Petra [*raising her glass*]. Your health, father.

Hovstad and Billing. Your health, your health, doctor!

Horster [*touching glasses with the doctor*]. I wish you much joy of your discovery.

Dr. Stockmann. Thanks, thanks, my good friends. I am so heartily glad;—ah! it is in truth a blessing to know in one's own mind that one has deserved well of his native town and his fellow-citizens. Hurrah! Katrine!

[*He seizes her with both hands, and whirls her round with him. Mrs. Stockmann screams and struggles. A burst of laughter, applause, and cheers for the doctor. The boys thrust their heads in at the door.*]

ACT II.

The same. The door of the dining-room is closed. Morning. MRS. STOCKMANN *enters from dining-room with a sealed letter in her hand, and goes to the room right first entrance, and peeps in.*

Mrs. Stockmann. Are you there, Thomas?

Dr. Stockmann [*within*]. Yes, I've just got back. [*Enters.*] What is it?

Mrs. Stockmann. A letter from your brother.

[*Hands him letter.*]

Dr. Stockmann. Ah! let's see. [*Opens envelope and reads.*] "The enclosed MS. remitted herewith—— [*Reads on muttering.*] Hm——!

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, what does he say?

Dr. Stockmann [*putting paper in his pocket*]. Nothing; he only writes that he'll come up himself about midday.

Mrs. Stockmann. Then you must for once remember to stay at home.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh! I can do that well enough, for I've finished my morning's work.

Mrs. Stockmann. I am very curious to know how he takes it.

Dr. Stockmann. You'll see he won't be overpleased that I, and not he himself, have made the discovery.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, aren't you afraid of that, too?

Dr. Stockmann. No; at bottom you may be sure he'll be glad. But still—Peter is so d——bly afraid that others besides himself should do anything for the good of the town.

Mrs. Stockmann. Do you know, Thomas, you ought to be kind, and share the honours with him. Couldn't you say it was he that put you on the track——

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, gladly, for aught I care. If only I can set matters straighter, I——

[*Old* MORTEN KIIL *peeps in through the further door, looks round inquiringly, and speaks slyly.*]

Morten Kiil. Is it—is it true?

Mrs. Stockmann [*going towards him*]. Father, is that you?

Dr. Stockmann. Hallo! Father-in-law; good morning, good morning.

Mrs. Stockmann. But do come in.

Morten Kiil. Yes, if it's true; if not, I'm off again.

Dr. Stockmann. If what is true?

Morten Kiil. That ridiculous story about the water-works. Now, *is* it true?

Dr. Stockmann. Why, of course it is. But how did you come to hear of *that?*

Morten Kiil [*coming in*]. Petra flew in on her way to school——

Dr. Stockmann. No; did she though?

Morten Kiil. Ay, ay—and she told me—I thought she was only trying to make game of me; but that is not like Petra either.

Dr. Stockmann. No, indeed; how could you think that?

Morten Kiil. Ah! one should never trust anybody. You can be made a fool of before you know it. So it is true, after all?

Dr. Stockmann. Most certainly it is. Now just sit down, father-in-law. [*Forces him down on to the sofa.*] And isn't it a real blessing for the town?

↳ And for him Cackeation!

Morten Kiil [*suppressing his laughter*]. Blessing for the town?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, that I made the discovery at such a favourable time——

Morten Kiil [*as before*]. Yes, yes, yes; but I never would have believed you could have played your very own brother such a trick.

Dr. Stockmann. Such a trick!

Mrs. Stockmann. But really, dear father——

Morten Kiil [*resting his hands and chin on the top of his stick and winking slyly at the doctor*]. Now, what is it all about? Isn't it this way, that some animal has got into the water-pipes?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes; infusorial animals.

Morten Kiil. And a good many of them have got in, Petra says; quite an enormous number.

Dr. Stockmann. Certainly. There may be hundreds of thousands.

Morten Kiil. But no one can see them. Isn't that so?

Dr. Stockmann. True; no one can see them.

Morten Kiil [*with a quiet, chuckling laugh*]. I'll be d—d if that isn't the best thing I've heard from you.

Dr. Stockmann. What do you mean?

Morten Kiil. But you'll never be able to make the Burgomaster believe anything of the sort.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, that remains to be seen.

Morten Kiil. Do you really think he'll be so foolish?

Dr. Stockmann. I hope the whole town will be so foolish.

Morten Kiil. The whole town Well, that may be. But it serves them right; much good may it do them. They wanted to be so much cleverer than we old fellows. They chivvied me out of the chairmanship of the Board. Yes, I tell you they chivvied me out like a dog, that they did.

But now it's their turn. Only you keep the game up with them, Stockmann.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes; but, father-in-law——

Morten Kiil. Keep it up, I say. [*Rising.*] If you can make the Burgomaster and his friends pay through the nose, I'll give a hundred crowns straight away for the poor.

Dr. Stockmann. Now, that would be good of you.

Morten Kiil. Yes. I've not got much to throw away, as you know; but if you do that, I'll give the poor fifty crowns at Christmas.

[*Enter* HOVSTAD *from ante-room.*]

Hovstad. Good morning! [*Pausing.*] Oh! I beg your pardon——

Dr. Stockmann. Not at all. Come in, come in.

Morten Kiil [*chuckling again*]. He! Is he in it, too?

Hovstad. What do you mean?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, of course, he's in it.

Morten Kiil. I might have known it! It must be put into the papers. Ah! you're the right sort, Stockmann. Let them have it. Now I'm off.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh no! Stop a little longer, father-in-law.

Morten Kiil. No, I'm off now. Play them as many tricks as you can; I'll see you don't lose by it.

[*Exit.* MRS. STOCKMANN *goes off with him.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*laughing*]. Only think! That old fellow won't believe a word about that affair of the water-works.

Hovstad. Was that what he——?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes; that was what we were talking about. And maybe you've come to do the same.

Hovstad. Yes. Have you a moment to spare, doctor?

Dr. Stockmann. As many as you like, old man.

Hovstad. Have you heard anything from the Burgomaster?

Dr. Stockmann. Not yet. He'll be here presently.

Hovstad. I've been thinking over the matter since last evening.

Dr. Stockmann. Well——?

Hovstad. To you, as a doctor and a man of science, this business of the water-works is an isolated affair. I fancy it hasn't occurred to you that a good many other things are connected with it.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes—how? Let's sit down, old fellow No—there, on the sofa.

[HOVSTAD *sits on sofa; the doctor on an easy chair on the other side of the table.*]

Dr. Stockmann. Well, so you think——?

Hovstad. You said yesterday that the bad water is caused by impurities in the soil——

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, undoubtedly, it is caused by that poisonous swamp up in the mill dale.

Hovstad. Excuse me, doctor, but I think it is caused by quite another swamp.

Dr. Stockmann. What sort of a swamp may that be?

Hovstad. The swamp our whole municipal life stands and rots in.

Dr. Stockmann. Mr. Hovstad, whatever have you got hold of now?

Hovstad. All the affairs of the town have little by little come into the hands of a set of bureaucrats.

Dr. Stockmann. Come, now, they're not all bureaucrats.

Hovstad. No; but those who are not are their friends and adherents. They are all wealthy men, the bearers of distinguished names in the town; it is they who control and govern us.

Dr. Stockmann. But they are men of ability and shrewdness.

Hovstad. Did they show their ability and shrewdness when they laid down the water-pipes where they are?

Dr. Stockmann. No; that was, of course, very stupid of them. But that'll be set right now.

Hovstad. Do you think it will be done so smoothly?

Dr. Stockmann. Well, smoothly or not smoothly, it'll have to be done.

Hovstad. Yes, if the press takes it up.

Dr. Stockmann. Not at all necessary, my dear fellow; I'm sure my brother——

Hovstad. Excuse me, doctor, but I want you to know that I think of taking up the matter.

Dr. Stockmann. In the paper?

Hovstaa. Yes. When I took over the *People's Messenger*, I determined that I would break up this ring of obstinate old blockheads who hold everything in their hands.

Dr. Stockmann. But you yourself told me what it all ended in. You nearly ruined the paper.

Hovstaa. Yes, we had to draw in our horns then, that's true enough. For there was the danger that the Baths wouldn't be started if these men were thrown out. But now matters are different, and now we can do without these gentry.

Dr. Stockmann. Do without them, yes; but still we owe them much.

Hovstad. Which shall be paid to the full. But a journalist of such democratic opinions as mine can't let such an opportunity as this slip through his fingers. He must explode the fable of the infallibility of our rulers. Such stuff as this must be got rid of, like every other superstition.

Dr. Stockmann. I agree with you there, Mr. Hovstad, with all my heart. If it is a superstition, away with it.

Hovstad. Now, I should be sorry to deal too harshly with the Burgomaster, as he is your brother. But I know you think with me—the truth before all other considerations.

Dr. Stockmann. Why, of course. But—but——

Hovstad. You mustn't think ill of me. I am neither more obstinate nor more ambitious than most men.

Dr. Stockmann. But, my dear fellow, who says you are?

Hovstad. I come from humble folk, as you know, and I have had occasion to see what is wanted by the lower classes of society. And this is, that they should have a share in the direction of public affairs, doctor. *This* develops power and knowledge and self-respect——

Dr. Stockmann. I understand that perfectly.

Hovstad. Yes, and I think a journalist assumes an immense responsibility when he neglects an opportunity of aiding the masses, the poor, the oppressed. I know well enough that the upper classes will call this stirring up the people, and so forth, but they can do as they please, if only my conscience is clear, I——

Dr. Stockmann. Just so, just so, dear Mr. Hovstad. But still—deuce take it—[*a knock at the door*]. Come in!

[*Enter* ASLAKSEN, *the printer, at the door of the ante-room. He is humbly but neatly dressed in black, wearing a white, slightly crumpled neckerchief, and carrying gloves and a felt hat.*]

Aslaksen [*bowing*]. I beg your pardon, doctor, for making so bold——

Dr. Stockmann [*rising*]. Hallo! if it isn't Printer Aslaksen!

Aslaksen. Yes it is, doctor.

Hovstad [*getting up*]. Do you want me, Aslaksen?

Aslaksen. No, I don't. I didn't know I should meet you here. No, it was for the doctor himself——

Dr. Stockmann. Well, what can I do for you?

Aslaksen. Is what I've heard from Mr. Billing true—that the doctor is thinking of getting us better water-works?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, for the Baths.

Aslaksen. Oh! yes, I know that. So I came to say that I'll back up the affair with all my might.

Hovstad [*to the doctor*]. You see!

Dr. Stockmann. I'm sure I thank you heartily, but——

Aslaksen. For it might do you no harm to have us middle-class men at your back. We now form a compact majority in the town—when we really make up our minds to. And it's always as well, doctor, to have the majority with you.

Dr. Stockmann. That is undoubtedly true, but I can't conceive that any special preparation will be necessary. I think that in so clear and straightforward a matter——

Aslaksen. Yes. But all the same, it can do no harm; for I know the local authorities so well. The people in power are not very much inclined to adopt suggestions coming from others. And so I think it wouldn't be amiss if we made some sort of a demonstration.

Hovstad. I think so too.

Dr. Stockmann. Demonstrate, say you? But what do you want to demonstrate about?

Aslaksen. Of course with great moderation, doctor. I am always in favour of moderation; for moderation is a citizen's first virtue—at least those are my sentiments.

Dr. Stockmann. We all know that about you, Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. Yes, I think I may claim that much. And this affair of the water-works is so very important for us small middle-class men. The Baths bid fair to become a kind of little gold-mine for the town. And it is through the Baths that the whole lot of us are going to get our living, especially we householders. And so we shall gladly support

the Baths all we can. So, as I am Chairman of the Householders' Association——

Dr. Stockmann. Well?

Aslaksen. And as I am agent for the Moderation Society —of course you know, doctor, that I work on behalf of moderation?

Dr. Stockmann. To be sure, to be sure.

Aslaksen. So I naturally meet a great many people. And as I am known to be a temperate and law-abiding citizen, as the doctor himself well knows, I have a certain amount of influence in the town, a position of some authority—though I say it that shouldn't.

Dr. Stockmann. I know that very well, Mr. Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. Well, so you see it would be easy for me to get up an address, if it came to a pinch.

Dr. Stockmann. An address?

Aslaksen. Yes, a kind of vote of thanks to you, from the citizens of the town, for bringing to light a matter of such importance to the whole community. It goes without saying that it will have to be drawn up with befitting moderation, so that the authorities and persons of position may not be set against it. And if only we are careful about that, no one can take offence, I think.

Hovstad. Well, even if they didn't like it particularly——

Aslaksen. No, no, no; nothing to offend those in authority, Mr. Hovstad. No opposition to people who stand in such close relation to us; I've never gone in for that in my life; no good ever comes of it either. But no one can object to the thoughtful, free expression of a citizen's opinion.

Dr. Stockmann [*shaking his hand*]. I can't tell you, dear Mr. Aslaksen, how heartily it delights me to find so much support among my fellow-citizens. I am so happy—

so happy! Look here! Won't you take a drop of sherry? Eh?

Aslaksen. No, thank you; I never take any kind of spirituous drink.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, then, a glass of beer—what say you to that?

Aslaksen. Thanks; not that either, doctor. I never take anything so early in the day. But now I'll be off to town, and talk with the householders, and prepare public opinion.

Dr. Stockmann. Now, that is extremely good of you, Mr. Aslaksen; but I can't really get into my head that all these preparations are necessary; I think the matter will go of itself.

Aslaksen. Officials are always very slow, doctor—God forbid I should say this by way of accusation——

Hovstad. To-morrow we'll stir them up in the paper, Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. But no violence, Mr. Hovstad. Proceed with moderation, or you'll do nothing with them. You take my advice, for I have gained experience in the school of life. And now I'll say good-morning to the doctor. You know, now, that we small middle-class men, anyhow, stand behind you like a rock. You have the compact majority on your side, doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Many thanks, my dear Mr. Aslaksen. [*Holds out his hand.*] Good-bye, good-bye.

Aslaksen. Are you coming to the printing-office, Mr. Hovstad?

Hovstad. I'll come on presently. I've something to see to first.

Aslaksen. All right.

[*Bows, and goes.* DR. STOCKMANN *accompanies him into the ante-room.*]

Hovstad [*as the doctor re-enters*]. Well, what do you say to that, doctor? Don't you think it is high time we weeded out and got rid of all this apathy and vacillation and cowardice?

Dr. Stockmann. Are you speaking of Aslaksen?

Hovstad. Yes, I am. He is one of those who are in the swamp, though he's a good enough fellow in other things. And so are most of the people here; they're for ever see-sawing and oscillating from one side to the other, and what with scruples and doubts, they never dare to advance a step.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but Aslaksen seems to me so thoroughly well-intentioned.

Hovstad. There is one thing I value more highly; that is to stand your ground as a trusty, self-reliant man.

Dr. Stockmann. There I am quite with you.

Hovstad. That's why I am going to seize this opportunity now to see if I can't stir up the well-intentioned among them for once. The worship of authority must be rooted up in this town. This immense, inexcusable blunder of the water-works should be enough to open the eyes of every voter.

Dr. Stockmann. Very well! If you think it is for the good of the community, so let it be; but not till I've spoken to my brother.

Hovstad. Anyhow, I'll be getting ready a leader in the meanwhile. And if the Burgomaster won't go in for it——

Dr. Stockmann. But how can you imagine such a thing?

Hovstad. It can be imagined well enough. And then——

Dr. Stockmann. Well then, I promise you; look here—then you may print my paper—put it in just as it is.

Hovstad. May I really? Is that a promise?

Dr. Stockmann [*handing him MS.*]. There it is; take it

with you. It can do no harm for you to read it; and then tell me what you think of it.

Hovstad. Thanks, thanks; I shall do so willingly. And now, good-bye, doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Good-bye, good-bye. Yes, you'll see it will all go smoothly, Mr. Hovstad, so smoothly.

Hovstad. Hm! We shall see.

[*Bows. Exit through ante-room.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*going to dining-room door and looking in*]. Katrine! Hallo! you back, Petra?

Petra [*entering*]. Yes, I've just got back from school.

Mrs. Stockmann [*entering*]. Hasn't he been here yet?

Dr. Stockmann. Peter? No; but I've been having a long talk with Hovstad. He is quite overwhelmed at my discovery. For, you see, it is much further reaching than I thought at first. And so he has placed his paper at my disposal if occasion requires.

Mrs. Stockmann. But do you think you will need it?

Dr. Stockmann. Not I? But all the same, one is proud to think that the free, independent press is on one's side. Just think! I've also had a visit from the director of the Householders' Association.

Mrs. Stockmann. Really! And what did he want?

Dr. Stockmann. To offer me support too. Everyone of them will stand by me if there should be any unpleasantness. Katrine, do you know what I have behind me?

Mrs. Stockmann. Behind you? No. What have you behind you?

Dr. Stockmann. The compact majority!

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh! Is that good for you, Thomas?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, indeed; I should think it was good! [*Rubbing his hands as he walks up and down.*] Ah!

by Jove! what a delight it is to be in such fraternal union with one's fellow-citizens!

Petra. And to do so much good, and be so helpful, father.

Dr. Stockmann. And to do it, into the bargain, for one's native town!

Mrs. Stockmann. There's the bell.

Dr. Stockmann. That must be he. [*Knock at the door.*] Come in!

[*Enter* BURGOMASTER STOCKMANN *from the ante-room.*]

Burgomaster. Good morning.

Dr. Stockmann. I'm glad to see you, Peter.

Mrs. Stockmann. Good-morning, brother-in-law. How are you?

Burgomaster. Oh, thanks, so, so. [*To the doctor.*] Yesterday evening, after office hours, I received a dissertation from you concerning the condition of the water connected with the Baths.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes. Have you read it?

Burgomaster. I have.

Dr. Stockmann. And what do you think of the affair?

Burgomaster. Hm—— [*Glancing at the women.*]

Mrs. Stockmann. Come, Petra.

[*She and* PETRA *go into the room, left.*

Burgomaster [*after a pause*]. Was it really necessary to make all those investigations behind my back?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, till I was absolutely certain I——

Burgomaster. And so you are certain now?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and I suppose it has convinced you too.

Burgomaster. Is it your intention to submit this statement to the Board of Directors as an official document?

Dr. Stockmann. Of course. Why, something must be done in the matter, and that promptly.

Burgomaster. After your wont, brother, you use very strong expressions in your statement. Why, you actually say that what we offer our visitors is a persistent poison!

Dr. Stockmann. But, Peter, can it be called anything else? Only think—poisonous water both internally and externally! And that for poor sick folk who come to us in good faith, and who pay us heavily to heal them.

Burgomaster. And from this you come to the conclusion that we must build a sewer which will carry off all the supposed impurities from the Miller's Dale, and relay all the water-pipes.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes. Can you suggest any other alternative?—I know of none.

Burgomaster. I looked in at the town engineer's this morning, and so—half in jest—I brought up the subject of these alterations as of a matter we might possibly have to take into consideration at some future time.

Dr. Stockmann. Possibly at some future time!

Burgomaster. He smiled at my apparent extravagance—naturally. Have you taken the trouble to reflect upon what these proposed alterations would cost? From the information I have received, these expenses would most likely run up to several hundred thousand crowns!

Dr. Stockmann. So much as that?

Burgomaster. Yes. But the worst is to come. The work would take at least two years.

Dr. Stockmann. Two years; do you mean to say two whole years?

Burgomaster. At least. And what are we to do in the meanwhile with the Baths? Are we to close them? For that is what it would come to. Besides, do you believe

anyone would come here if the rumour got abroad that the water is injurious to health?

Dr. Stockmann. But, Peter, you know it is injurious.

Burgomaster. And all this now, just now, when the Baths are beginning to do well. Neighbouring towns, too, have some idea of establishing Baths. Don't you see that they would at once set to work to divert the full stream of visitors to themselves? It's beyond a doubt! And we should be left stranded! We should probably have to give up the whole costly undertaking; and so you would have ruined your native town.

Dr. Stockmann. I—ruined!

Burgomaster. It is only through the Baths that the town has any future worth speaking of. You surely know that as well as I do.

Dr. Stockmann. But what do you think should be done?

Burgomaster. Your statement has not succeeded in convincing me that the condition of the water at the Baths is as serious as you represent.

Dr. Stockmann. I tell you it is, if anything, worse—or will be in the summer, when the hot weather sets in.

Burgomaster. The existing supply of water for the Baths is once for all a fact, and must naturally be treated as such. But probably the directors, at some future time, will not be indisposed to take into their consideration whether, by making certain pecuniary sacrifices, it may not be possible to introduce some improvements.

Dr. Stockmann. And do you imagine I could agree for a moment to such a deception?

Burgomaster. Deception?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, it would be a deception—a fraud, a lie; an absolute crime against the public, against all society.

Burgomaster. I have not, as I have already remarked, been able to attain the conviction that there is really any such imminent danger.

Dr. Stockmann. You have—you must have. My demonstration was so plainly true and right. Of that I am sure! And you know that perfectly, Peter, only you don't admit it. It was you who insisted that both the Baths and the water-works should be laid out where they now are; and it is *that*, it is that d—d blunder which you won't confess. Pshaw! Do you think I don't see through you?

Burgomaster. And even if that were so? If, perhaps, I do watch over my reputation with some anxiety, I do it for the good of the town. Without moral authority I cannot guide and direct affairs in such a manner as I deem necessary for the welfare of the whole community. Therefore—and on various other grounds—it is of great moment to me that your statement should not be submitted to the Board of Directors. It must be kept back for the good of all. Later on I will bring up the matter for discussion, and we will do the best we can quietly; but nothing whatever, not a single word, of this unfortunate business must be made public.

Dr. Stockmann. But it can't be prevented now, my dear Peter.

Burgomaster. It must and shall be prevented.

Dr. Stockmann. It can't be, I tell you; far too many people know about it already.

Burgomaster. Know about it! Who? Surely not those fellows on the *People's Messenger*, who——

Dr. Stockmann. Oh, yes! They know, too. The liberal, independent press will take good care you do your duty.

Burgomaster [*after a short pause*]. You are an extremely reckless man, Thomas. Haven't you reflected what the consequences of this may be to yourself?

Dr. Stockmann. Consequences?—Consequences to me?

Burgomaster. Yes—to you and yours.

Dr. Stockmann. What the devil do you mean?

Burgomaster. I believe I have at all times conducted myself towards you as a useful and helpful brother.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, you have, and I thank you for it.

Burgomaster. I ask for nothing. To some extent I had to do this—for my own sake. I always hoped I should be able to keep you within certain bounds if I helped to improve your pecuniary position.

Dr. Stockmann. What! So it was only for your own sake——!

Burgomaster. To some extent, I say. It is painful for a man in an official position when his nearest relative goes and compromises himself time after time.

Dr. Stockmann. And you think I do that?

Burgomaster. Yes, unfortunately, you do, without yourself knowing it. Yours is a turbulent, pugnacious, rebellious spirit. And then you have an unhappy propensity for rushing into print upon every possible and impossible matter. You no sooner hit upon an idea than you must write at once some newspaper article or a whole pamphlet about it.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but isn't it a citizen's duty, whenever he has a new idea, to communicate it to the public.

Burgomaster. Pshaw! The public doesn't need new ideas. The public is best served by the good old recognised ideas that they have already.

Dr. Stockmann. And you say that thus bluntly——?

Burgomaster. Yes, I must speak to you frankly for once. Until now I have tried to avoid it, as I know how irritable you are; but now I am bound to speak certain truths to

you, Thomas. You have no conception how much you injure yourself by your rashness. You complain of the authorities, ay, of the government itself—you even revile them and maintain you've been slighted, persecuted. But what else can you expect, firebrand that you are.

Dr. Stockmann. What next! So I'm a firebrand, too, am I?

Burgomaster. Yes, Thomas, you are an extremely difficult man to work with. I know it from experience. You set yourself above all considerations; you seem quite to forget that it is I whom you have to thank for your position here as medical officer of the Baths.

Dr. Stockmann. I had a right to it! I, and no one else! I was the first to discover that the town might become a flourishing watering-place. I was the only one who saw it then. For years I stood alone struggling for this idea of mine, and I wrote and wrote——

Burgomaster. No doubt. But then the right time hadn't come. Of course, in that out-of-the-world hole of yours, you were not in a position to judge of that. As soon as the propitious moment came I—and others—took the matter in hand——

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and you bungled the whole of my splendid plan. Oh! we see now what shining lights you were.

Burgomaster. In my opinion we are now seeing that you again need some outlet for your pugnacity. You want to fly in the face of your superiors—and that's an old habit of yours. You can't endure any authority over you; you look jealously upon anyone who has a higher official post than yourself; you regard him as a personal enemy, and then it's all one to you what kind of weapon you use against him; one is as good as another. But now I have called your attention to this, to the great interests at stake for the

town, and consequently for me also. And therefore I tell you, Thomas, that I am inexorable in the demand I am about to make of you!

Dr. Stockmann. And what is this demand?

Burgomaster. As you have been so garrulous in talking about this unpleasant business to outsiders, although it should have been kept an official secret, of course it can't be hushed up. All sorts of rumours will be spread everywhere, and the evil-disposed among us will swell these rumours with all sorts of additions. It will, therefore, be necessary for you to meet these rumours.

Dr. Stockmann. I? How? I don't understand you.

Burgomaster. We venture to expect that after further investigation you will come to the conclusion that the affair is not nearly so dangerous or serious as you had, at the first moment, imagined.

Dr. Stockmann. Ah, ha! So you expect that!

Burgomaster. Furthermore, we shall expect you to have confidence in the Board of Directors, and to express your belief that they will thoroughly and conscientiously carry out all measures for the removal of every shortcoming.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes; but you'll never be able to do that as long as you go on tinkering and patching. I tell you that, Peter, and it is my deepest, most sincere conviction.

Burgomaster. As an official, you've no right to have any individual conviction.

Dr. Stockmann [*starting*]. No right to any——

Burgomaster. As official, I say. In your private capacity, good gracious, that's another matter. But as a subordinate servant of the Baths, you've no right to express any conviction at issue with that of your superiors.

Dr. Stockmann. That is going too far! I, a doctor, a man of science, have no right to——

Burgomaster. The matter in question is not a purely scientific one; it is a complex affair; it is both a technical and an economic matter.

Dr. Stockmann. Pshaw! What's that to me? What the devil do I care! I will be free to speak out upon any subject on earth.

Burgomaster. As you please. But not a word about the Baths—we forbid that.

Dr. Stockmann [*shouting*]. You forbid! you!—such fellows——

Burgomaster. I forbid you that—I, your chief; and when I forbid you anything, you'll have to obey.

Dr. Stockmann [*controlling himself*]. Peter, really, if you weren't my brother——

[PETRA *throws open the door.*]

Petra. Father, you shall not submit to this!

[MRS. STOCKMANN *following her.*]

Mrs. Stockmann. Petra, Petra!

Burgomaster. Ah! so we've been listening!

Mrs. Stockmann. You spoke so loud; we couldn't help——

Petra. Yes, I did stand there and listen.

Burgomaster. Well, on the whole, I'm glad——

Dr. Stockmann [*coming nearer to him*]. You spoke to me of forbidding and obeying——

Burgomaster. You forced me to speak to you in that tone.

Dr. Stockmann. And have I, in a public declaration, to give myself the lie?

Burgomaster. We consider it absolutely necessary that you should issue a statement in the terms I have requested.

Dr. Stockmann. And if I don't—obey?

Burgomaster. Then we shall ourselves put forth a statement to reassure the public.

Dr. Stockmann. Well and good. Then I'll write against you. I hold to my opinion. I shall prove that *I* am right, and you wrong. And what will you say to that?

Burgomaster. I shall then be unable to prevent your dismissal.

Dr. Stockmann. What——!

Petra. Father! Dismissal!

Mrs. Stockmann. Dismissal!

Burgomaster. Your dismissal from the Baths. I shall be obliged to urge that notice be given you at once, in order to dissociate you from everything concerning the Baths.

Dr. Stockmann. And you would dare to do that!

Burgomaster. It is you yourself who play the daring game.

Petra. Uncle, such treatment of a man like father is shameful.

Mrs. Stockmann. Do be quiet, Petra.

Burgomaster [*looking at Petra*]. Ah, ah! We already allow ourselves to express an opinion. Of course! [*To Mrs. Stockmann.*] Sister-in-law, apparently you're the most sensible person in the house. Use all your influence with your husband; try to make him realise all this will bring with it, both for his family——

Dr. Stockmann. My family concerns only myself.

Burgomaster. ——Both for his family, I say, and the town in which he lives.

Dr. Stockmann. It is I who have the real good of the town at heart. I want to lay bare the evils that, sooner or later, must come to light. Ah! You shall yet see that I love my native town.

Burgomaster. You, who, in your blind obstinacy, want to cut off the town's chief source of prosperity.

Dr. Stockmann. The source is poisoned, man! Are you mad? We live by trafficking in filth and garbage. The whole of our developing social life is rooted in a lie!

Burgomaster. Idle fancies—or something worse. The man who makes such offensive insinuations against his own native place must be an enemy of society.

Dr. Stockmann [*going towards him*]. And you dare to——

Mrs. Stockmann [*throwing herself between them*]. Thomas!

Petra [*seizing her father's arm.*] Oh! hush, father.

Burgomaster. I will not expose myself to physical violence. You are warned now. Reflect upon what is due to yourself and to your family. Good-bye.

[*Exit.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*walking up and down*]. And I must bear such treatment! In my own house. Katrine! What do you think of it?

Mrs. Stockmann. Indeed, it is a shame and an insult, Thomas——

Petra. If only I could give it to uncle——!

Dr. Stockmann. It is my own fault. I ought to have rebelled against them long ago—have shown my teeth—and made them feel them! And so he called me an enemy of society. Me! I will not bear this; by Heaven, I will not!

Mrs. Stockmann. But, dear Thomas, after all, your brother has the power——

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but I have the right!

Mrs. Stockmann. Ah, yes, right, right! What is the good of being right when you haven't any might?

Petra. Oh mother! how can you talk so?

Dr. Stockmann. What! No good in a free society to have right on your side? You are absurd, Katrine. And

besides, haven't I the free and independent press with me? The compact majority behind me? That's might enough, I should think!

Mrs. Stockmann. But, good Heavens! Thomas, you're surely not thinking of——

Dr. Stockmann. What am I not thinking of?

Mrs. Stockmann. Of setting yourself up against your brother, I mean.

Dr. Stockmann. What the devil would you have me do, if I didn't stick to what is right and true?

Petra. Yes, I too would like to know that?

Mrs. Stockmann. But that will be of no earthly use. If they won't they won't.

Dr. Stockmann. Ho, ho! Katrine, just wait awhile and you'll see I shall yet get the best of the battle.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, you'll fight them—but you'll get your dismissal; that's what will happen.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, then, I shall at any rate have done my duty towards the public, towards society. I to be called an enemy of society!

Mrs. Stockmann. But towards your family, Thomas? To us here at home? Don't you think your duty is to those for whom you should provide?

Petra. Ah! mother, do not always think first and foremost of us.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, it's all very well for you to talk; if need be you can stand alone. But think of the boys, Thomas, and think a little of yourself too, and of me——

Dr. Stockmann. But, really, you're quite mad, Katrine. Should I be such a miserable coward as to humble myself to Peter and his damned crew. Should I ever again in all my life have another happy hour?

Mrs. Stockmann. That I cannot say; but God preserve

us from the happiness we shall all of us have if you remain obstinate. Then you would again be without a livelihood, without any regular income. I think we had enough of that in the old days. Remember them, Thomas; think of what it all means.

Dr. Stockmann [*struggling with himself and clenching his hands*]. And such threats this officemonger dares utter to a free and honest man! Isn't it horrible, Katrine?

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes; that he is behaving badly to you is certainly true. But, good God! there is so much injustice to which we must submit here on earth! Here are the boys. Look at them! What is to become of them? Oh! no, no, you cannot find it in your heart——

[EJLIF *and* MORTEN *with school-books have entered meanwhile.*]

Dr. Stockmann. The boys! [*Suddenly stands still, firmly and decidedly.*] Never, though the whole earth should crumble, will I bend my neck beneath the yoke.

[*Goes towards his room.*]

Mrs. Stockmann [*following him*]. Thomas, what are you going to do?

Dr. Stockmann [*at the door*]. I want to have the right to look into my boys' eyes when they are grown men.

——[*Exit into room.*]

Mrs. Stockmann [*bursts into tears*]. Ah! God help and comfort us all!

Petra. Father is brave! He will not give in!

[*The boys ask wonderingly what it all means;* PETRA *signs to them to be quiet.*]

ACT III.

The Editor's Room, "People's Messenger." In the flat at the back a door left; to the right another door with glass panes, through which can be seen the printing-room. Another door right of the stage. In the middle of the room a large table covered with papers, newspapers, and books. Lower down left, a window, and by it a writing-desk and high chair. A few arm-chairs around the table; some others along the walls. The room is dingy and cheerless, the furniture shabby, the arm-chairs dirty and torn. Within the printing-room are seen a few compositors; further within, a hand-press at work. HOVSTAD, *the Editor, is seated at the writing-desk. Presently* BILLING *enters from the right with the doctor's manuscript in his hand.*

Billing. Well, I must say!——

Hovstad [*writing*]. Have you read it through?

Billing [*laying MS. on the desk*]. Yes, I should think I had.

Hovstad. Don't you think the doctor comes out strong——?

Billing. Strong! God bless me! he is crushing, that's what he is. Every word falls like a lever—I mean like the blow of a sledge-hammer.

Hovstad. Yes, but these folk don't fall at the first blow.

Billing. True enough, but we'll keep on hammering away, blow after blow, till the whole lot of aristocrats come crashing down. As I sat in there reading that, I seemed to hear the revolution thundering afar.

Hovstad [*turning round*]. Sh! Don't let Aslaksen hear anything of that sort.

Billing [*in a lower voice*]. Aslaksen is a weak-kneed, cowardly fellow, who hasn't any manhood about him. But this time surely you'll insist on having your own way. Hm? You'll print the doctor's paper?

Hovstad. Yes, if only the Burgomaster doesn't give way I——

Billing. That would be d—d unpleasant.

Hovstad. Well, whatever happens, fortunately we can turn the situation to our account. If the Burgomaster won't agree to the doctor's proposal, he'll have all the small middle-class against him—all the Householders' Association, and the rest of them. And if he does agree to it, he'll fall out with the whole crew of big shareholders in the Baths, who, until now, have been his main support——

Billing. Ah! yes, yes; for it's certain they'll have to fork out a pretty heavy sum——

Hovstad. You may take your oath of that. And then, don't you see, the ring will be broken up, and we shall day by day show the public that the Burgomaster is utterly unfit in all respects, and that all positions of trust in the town, the whole municipal government, must be placed in the hands of persons of liberal ideas.

Billing. God bless me, but that's strikingly true. I see it, I see it. We are on the eve of a revolution!

[*A knock at the door.*]

Hovstad. Sh—[*calls.*] Come in! [*Dr. Stockmann enters from flat left, Hovstad going towards him.*] Ah! here's the doctor. Well?

Dr. Stockmann. Print away, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. Is it to go in just as it is?

Billing. Hurrah!

Dr Stockmann. Print away, I tell you. Of course it is to

go in as it is. Since they will have it so, they shall! Now, there'll be war in the town, Mr. Billing!

Billing. War to the knife is what I want—to the knife, to the death, doctor!

Dr. Stockmann. This article is only the beginning. My head's already full of plans for four or five other articles. But where do you stow away Aslaksen?

Billing [*calling into the printing-room*]. Aslaksen! just come here a moment.

Hovstad. Did you say four or five more articles? On the same subject?

Dr. Stockmann. Heaven forbid, my dear fellow. No; they deal with quite different matters. But they all arise out of the water-works and the sewers. One thing leads to another, you know. It is like beginning to shake an old house, exactly the same.

Billing. God bless me, that's true! And you can never do any good till you've pulled down the whole rubbish.

Aslaksen [*enters from printing-room*]. Pulled down! Surely the doctor is not thinking of pulling down the Baths?

Hovstad. Not at all! Don't be alarmed.

Dr. Stockmann. No, we were talking of something quite different. Well, what do you think of my article, Mr. Hovstad?

Hovstad. I think it is simply a masterpiece——

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, isn't it? That does please me, that does please me.

Hovstad. It is so clear and to the point. One doesn't in the least need to be a specialist in order to understand the reasoning. I am sure every intelligent, honest man will be on your side.

Aslaksen. And let us hope all the prudent ones too.

Billing. Both the prudent and imprudent—indeed, I think well-nigh the whole town.

Aslaksen. Well, then, we may venture to print it.

Dr. Stockmann. I should think you could!

Hovstad. It shall go in to-morrow.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, plague take it, not one day must be lost. Look here, Aslaksen, this is what I wanted you for. You, personally, must take charge of the MS.

Aslaksen. Certainly I will.

Dr. Stockmann. Be as careful as if it were gold. No printers' errors, every word is important. I'll look in again presently; then I can make any small corrections. Ah! I can't say how I long to see the thing in print—to hurl it forth——

Billing. To hurl it—yes, like a thunderbolt!

Dr. Stockmann. And to submit it to the judgment of every intelligent fellow-citizen. Ah! you've no idea what I've had to put up with to-day. I've been threatened with all sorts of things. I was to be robbed of my most inalienable rights as a man.

Billing. What! Your rights as a man——!

Dr. Stockmann. I was to be humbled, made a coward of, was to set my personal gain above my deepest, holiest convictions——

Billing. God bless me! that is really too bad.

Hovstad. Well, just what was to be expected from that quarter.

Dr. Stockmann. But they'll get the worst of it, I can promise them. Henceforth, every day I'll throw myself into the breach in the *Messenger*, bombard them with one article after another——

Aslaksen. Yes, but look here——

Billing. Hurrah! There'll be war, there'll be war!

Dr. Stockmann. I will smite them to the earth. I will crush them, level all their entrenchments to the ground before the eyes of all right-thinking men. I'll do it.

Aslaksen. But all the same be reasonable, doctor; proceed with moderation——

Billing. Not at all, not at all, don't spare for dynamite.

Dr. Stockmann [*going on imperturbably*]. For remember that henceforth it is not merely a question of water-works and sewers. No, the whole of society must be cleansed, disinfected——

Billing. There sounded the word of salvation!

Dr. Stockmann. All the old bunglers must be got rid of, you understand. And that in every department! Such endless vistas have opened out before me to-day. It was not all clear to me until now, but now I will right everything. It is the young, vigorous banner-bearers we must seek, my friends; we must have new captains for all the outposts.

Billing. Hear, hear!

Dr. Stockmann. And if only we hold together all will go so smoothly, so smoothly! The whole revolution will be only like the launching of a ship. Don't you think so?

Hovstad. For my part, I believe we have now every prospect of placing our municipal affairs in the hands of those to whom they rightly belong.

Aslaksen. And if only we proceed with moderation, I really don't think there can be any danger.

Dr. Stockmann. Who the devil cares whether there's danger or not? What I do, I do in the name of truth and for conscience sake.

Hovstad. You are a man deserving of support, doctor.

Aslaksen. Yes, that's certain. The doctor is a true friend to the town; he is a sincere friend of society.

Billing. God bless me! Dr. Stockmann is a friend of the people, Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. I think the Householders' Association will soon adopt that expression.

Dr. Stockmann [*shaking their hands, deeply moved*]. Thanks, thanks, my dear, faithful friends, it does me good to hear you. My fine brother called me something very different just now. I'll pay him back with interest, though! But I must be off now to see a poor devil. I'll look in again, as I said. Be sure to take good care of the MS., Mr. Aslaksen, and on no account leave out any of my notes of exclamation! Rather put in a few more. Well, good-bye for the present, good-bye, good-bye.

[*Mutual salutations while they accompany him to the door. Exit.*]

Hovstad. He'll be of invaluable service to us.

Aslaksen. Yes, so long as he confines himself to the Baths. But if he goes further, it might not be advisable to go with him.

Hovstad. Hm! Well, that depends——

Billing. You're always so d—d afraid, Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. Afraid? Yes, when it is a question of attacking local magnates, I am afraid, Mr. Billing; that, let me tell you, I have learnt in the school of experience. But go for higher politics, attack the government itself, and you'll see if I'm afraid.

Billing. Oh! no, but that's where you contradict yourself.

Aslaksen. The fact is, I am a conscientious man. If you attack governments, you at least do society no harm, for the men attacked don't care a hang about it, you see; they stay where they are. But *local* authorities *can* be turned out, and thus a lot of know-nothings come to the front, and do no end of harm both to householders and others.

Hovstad. But the education of citizens by self-government—what do you think of *that?*

Aslaksen. When a man has anything to look after, he can't think of everything, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. Then I hope I may never have anything to look after.

Billing. Hear, hear!

Aslaksen [*smiling*]. Hm! (*Pointing to desk.*] Governor Stensgaard* sat in that editor's chair before you.

Billing [*spitting*]. Pooh! A turncoat like that!

Hovstad. I'm no weather-cock—and never will be.

Aslaksen. A politician must not swear to anything on earth, Mr. Hovstad. And as to you, Mr. Billing, you ought to take in a reef or two one of these days, since you're running for the post of secretary to the magistracy.

Billing. I——!

Hovstad. Are you really, Billing?

Billing. Well, yes—but, deuce take it, you know, I'm only doing so to annoy these wiseacres.

Aslaksen. Well, that doesn't concern me. But if I am called cowardly and inconsistent I should like to point out this: Printer Aslaksen's past is open to everyone's inspection. I have not changed at all, except that I am perhaps more moderate. My heart still belongs to the people, but I do not deny that my reason inclines somewhat towards the authorities—at least to the local authorities.

[*Exit into printing-room.*]

Billing. Don't you think we ought to get rid of him, Hovstad?

* This is the only case in which Ibsen introduces persons who have appeard in earlier plays. Aslaksen figures in "De Unges Forbund" (The Young Men's League), of which play Stensgaard is the central character. See Introduction.

Hovstad. Do you know of anyone else that'll advance money for the paper and printing?

Billing. It's a d—d nuisance not having the necessary capital.

Hovstad [*sitting down by desk*]. Yes, if we only had that——

Billing. Suppose you applied to Dr. Stockmann?

Hovstad [*turning over his papers*]. What would be the good? He has nothing himself.

Billing. No; but he has a good man behind him—old Morten Kiil—the "badger," as they call him.

Hovstad [*writing*]. Are you so sure he has anything?

Billing. Yes; God bless me, I know it for certain. And part of it will certainly go to Stockmann's family. He is sure to think of providing for them—anyhow, for the children.

Hovstad [*half turning*]. Are you counting on *that?*

Billing. Counting? Of course I don't count upon anything.

Hovstad. You're right there! And that post of secretary you shouldn't in the least count upon; for I can assure you you won't get it.

Billing. Do you think I don't know that as well as you? Indeed, I'm glad I shall not get it. Such a rebuff fires one's courage;—gives one a fresh supply of gall, and one needs that in a god-forsaken place like this, where any excitement is so rare.

Hovstad [*writing*]. Yes, yes.

Billing. Well—they'll soon hear of me! Now I'll go and draw up the Appeal to the Householders' Association.

[*Exit into room R.*]

Hovstad [*sitting by desk, gnawing his pen, says slowly*]. Hm! Yes, that'll do. [*A knock at the door.*] Come in.

[PETRA *enters from the door L. in flat.* HOVSTAD *rising.*] What! Is it you? Here?

Petra. Yes; please excuse me——

Hovstad [*offering her an arm-chair*]. Won't you sit down?

Petra. No, thanks; I must be off again directly.

Hovstad. I suppose it's something your father——

Petra. No. I've come on my own account. [*Takes a book from the pocket of her cloak.*] Here's that English story.

Hovstad. Why have you brought it back?

Petra. I won't translate it.

Hovstad. But you promised so faithfully——

Petra. Yes; but then I hadn't read it. And no doubt you've not read it either.

Hovstad. No; you know I can't read English, but——

Petra. Exactly; and that's why I wanted to tell you that you must find something else. [*Putting book on table.*] This can't possibly go into the *Messenger.*

Hovstad. Why not?

Petra. Because it is in direct contradiction to your own opinions.

Hovstad. Well, but for the sake of the cause——

Petra. You don't understand me yet. It is all about a supernatural power that looks after the so-called good people here on earth, and turns all things to their advantage at last, and all the bad people are punished.

Hovstad. Yes, but that's very fine. It's the very thing the public like.

Petra. And would you supply the public with such stuff? Why, you don't believe one word of it yourself. You know well enough that things don't really happen like that.

Hovstad. You're right there; but an editor can't always

do as he likes. He often has to yield to public opinion in small matters. After all, politics is the chief thing in life—at any rate for a newspaper; and if I want the people to follow me along the path of emancipation and progress, I mustn't scare them away. If they find such a moral story down in the cellar,* they're much more willing to stand what is printed above it—they feel themselves safer.

Petra. For shame! You wouldn't be such a hypocrite, and weave a web to ensnare your readers. You are not a spider.

Hovstad [*smiling*]. Thanks for your good opinion of me. No. That's Billing's idea, not mine.

Petra. Billing's!

Hovstad. Yes. At least he said so the other day. It was Billing who was so anxious to get the story into the paper; I don't even know the book.

Petra. But how Billing, with his advanced views——

Hovstad. Well, Billing is many-sided. He's running for the post of secretary to the magistracy, I hear.

Petra. I don't believe that, Hovstad. How could he condescend to such a thing?

Hovstad. Well, that you must ask him.

Petra. I could never have thought that of Billing.

Hovstad [*looking fixedly at her*]. No? Does that come as a revelation to you?

Petra. Yes. And yet—perhaps not. Ah! I don't know.

Hovstad. We journalists aren't worth much, Miss Petra.

Petra. Do you really think that?

Hovstad. I think so, sometimes.

Petra. Yes, in the little everyday squabbles—that I can

* The reference is to the continental plan; the feuilleton is separated from the main body of the page by a line.

understand. But now that you have taken up a great cause——

Hovstad. You mean that affair of your father's?

Petra. Exactly. But now I should think you must feel yourself worth more than the common herd.

Hovstad. Yes, to-day I do feel something of that sort.

Petra. Yes, don't you feel that? Ah! it is a glorious career you have chosen. Thus to clear the way for despised truths and new ideas—to stand forth fearlessly on the side of a wronged man——

Hovstad. Especially when this wronged man is—hm!—I hardly know how to put it.

Petra. You mean when he is so true and honest.

Hovstad [*in a low voice*]. I mean when he is your father——

Petra [*as if she had received a blow*]. *That?*

Hovstad. Yes, Petra—Miss Petra.

Petra. So *that* is what you think of first and foremost? Not the cause itself? Not the truth? Not father's big, warm heart?

Hovstad. Yes, of course, that as well.

Petra. No, thank you; you've just let the cat out of the bag, Mr. Hovstad. Now I shall never trust you again in anything.

Hovstad. Can you reproach me because it is chiefly for your sake——?

Petra. What I am angry with you for is that you have not acted honestly towards my father. You told him it was only the truth and the good of the community you cared about. You have fooled both father and me. You are not the man you pretend to be. And I shall never forgive you —never!

Hovstad. You should not say that so hardly, Miss Petra —not now.

Petra. Why not now?

—*Hovstad.* Because your father can't do without my help.

Petra [*looking scornfully at him*]. And that is what you are! Oh, shame!

Hovstad. No, no. I spoke thoughtlessly. You must not believe that.

Petra. I know what to believe. Good-bye.

[ASLAKSEN *enters from printing-room, hurriedly and mysteriously.*]

Aslaksen. Plague take it, Mr. Hovstad—[*seeing* PETRA] Sh! that's awkward.

Petra. Well, there's the book. You must give it to someone else.

[*Going towards main door.*]

Hovstad [*following her*]. But, Miss Petra——

Petra. Good-bye. [*Exit.*]

Aslaksen. I say, Mr. Hovstad!

Hovstad. Well, what is it?

Aslaksen. The Burgomaster is out there, in the printing-office.

Hovstad. The Burgomaster?

Aslaksen. Yes. He wants to speak to you; he came in by the back door—he didn't want to be seen.

Hovstad. What's the meaning of this? Don't go. I will myself—— [*Goes towards printing-room, opens the door, and bows as the Burgomaster enters.*] Take care, Aslaksen, that——

Aslaksen. I understand. [*Exit into printing-room.*]

Burgomaster. You didn't expect to see me here, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. No, I can't say I did.

Burgomaster [*looking about him*]. Why, you've arranged everything most comfortably here; quite charming.

Hovstad. Oh!

Burgomaster. And I've come, without any sort of notice, to occupy your time.

Hovstad. You are very welcome; I am quite at your service. Let me take your cap and stick. [*He does so, and puts them on a chair.*] And won't you sit down?

Burgomaster [*sitting down by table*]. Thanks. [*Hovstad also sits down by table.*] I have been much—very much annoyed to-day, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. Indeed? Oh, yes! With all your various duties, Burgomaster——

Burgomaster. To-day I've been worried by the doctor.

Hovstad. You don't say so? The doctor?

Burgomaster. He's been writing a sort of statement to the directors concerning certain supposed shortcomings of the Baths.

Hovstad. No, has he really?

Burgomaster. Yes; hasn't he told you? I thought he said——

Hovstad. Oh, yes, so he did. He said something about it.

Aslaksen [*from the office*]. Wherever is the MS——?

Hovstad [*in a tone of vexation*]. Hm? There it is on the desk.

Aslaksen [*finding it*]. All right.

Burgomaster. Why, that is it——

Aslaksen. Yes, that's the doctor's paper, Burgomaster.

Hovstad. Oh! was *that* what you were speaking of?

Burgomaster. The very same. What do you think of it?

Hovstad. I'm not a professional man, and I've only glanced at it.

Burgomaster. And yet you are going to print it?

Hovstad. I can't very well refuse so distinguished a man——

Aslaksen. I have nothing to do with the editing of the paper, Burgomaster.

Burgomaster. Of course not.

Aslaksen. I merely print whatever comes into my hands.

Burgomaster. That's as it should be.

Aslaksen. So I must—— [*Goes towards printing-room.*]

Burgomaster. No, stay one moment, Mr. Aslaksen. With your permission, Mr. Hovstad——

Hovstad. By all means, Burgomaster.

Burgomaster. You are a discreet and thoughtful man, Mr. Aslaksen.

Aslaksen. I'm glad to hear you say so, Burgomaster.

Burgomaster. And a man of considerable influence.

Aslaksen. Chiefly among the small middle-class.

Burgomaster. The small taxpayers are the most numerous —here as everywhere.

Aslaksen. That's true enough.

Burgomaster. But I do not doubt that you know what the feeling of most of them is. Isn't that so?

Aslaksen. Yes, I think I may say that I do, Burgomaster.

Burgomaster. Well—if there is such a praiseworthy spirit of self-sacrifice among the less wealthy citizens of the town, I——

Aslaksen. How so?

Hovstad. Self-sacrifice?

Burgomaster. It is an excellent sign of public spirit—a most excellent sign. I was near saying I should not have

expected it. But, of course, you know public feeling better than I do.

Aslaksen. Yes, but, Burgomaster——

Burgomaster. And assuredly it is no small sacrifice that the town is about to make.

Hovstad. The town?

Aslaksen. But I don't understand — it's about the Baths——

Burgomaster. According to a preliminary estimate, the alterations considered necessary by the doctor will come to several hundred thousand crowns.

Aslaksen. That's a large sum; but——

Burgomaster. Of course we shall be obliged to raise a municipal loan.

Hovstad [*rising*]. You don't mean to say that the town——?

Aslaksen. To be paid out of the rates? Out of the needy pockets of the small middle-class?

Burgomaster. Yes, my excellent Mr. Aslaksen, where should the funds come from?

Aslaksen. That's the business of the shareholders who own the Baths.

Burgomaster. The shareholders of the Baths are not in a position to go to further expense.

Aslaksen. Are you quite sure of that, Burgomaster?

Burgomaster. I have assured myself on the matter. So that if these extensive alterations are to be made, the town itself will have to bear the costs.

Aslaksen. Oh, d—n it all!—I beg your pardon!—but this is quite another matter, Mr. Hovstad.

Hovstad. Yes, it certainly is.

Burgomaster. The worst of it is, that we shall be obliged to close the establishment for some two years.

Hovstad. To close it? To close it completely?

Aslaksen. For two years!

Burgomaster. Yes, the work will require that time at least.

Aslaksen. But, d—n it all! we can't stand that, Burgomaster. What are we householders to live on meanwhile?

Burgomaster. Unfortunately, that's extremely difficult to say, Mr. Aslaksen. But what would you have us do? Do you think a single visitor will come here if we go about trying to persuade them into fancying the waters are poisoned, and that we are living on a pest ground, and the whole town——

Aslaksen. And it is all nothing but fancy?

Burgomaster. With the best intentions of the world, I've not been able to convince myself that it is anything else.

Aslaksen. But then it is quite inexcusable of Dr. Stockmann—I beg your pardon, Burgomaster, but——

Burgomaster. You are, unhappily, only speaking the truth, Mr. Aslaksen. Unfortunately, my brother has always been a headstrong man.

Aslaksen. And yet you are willing to support him in such a matter, Mr. Hovstad!

Hovstad. But who could possibly have imagined that——

Burgomaster. I have drawn up a short statement of the facts, as they appear from a sober-minded point of view. And in it I have hinted that various unavoidable drawbacks may be remedied by measures compatible with the finances of the Baths.

Hovstad. Have you the paper with you, Burgomaster?

Burgomaster [*searching in his pockets*]. Yes; I brought it with me in case you——

Aslaksen [*quickly*]. D—n it, there he is!

Burgomaster. Who? My brother?

Hovstad. Where, where?

Aslaksen. He's coming through the printing-room.

Burgomaster. What a nuisance! I should not like to meet him here, and yet there are several things I want to talk to you about.

Hovstad [*pointing to door L.*]. Go in there for a moment.

Burgomaster. But——?

Hovstad. You'll only find Billing there.

Aslaksen. Quick, quick, Burgomaster, he's just coming.

Burgomaster. Very well. But see that you get rid of him quickly.

[*Exit door L., which* ASLAKSEN *opens, bowing.*]

Hovstad. Be busy doing something, Aslaksen.

[*He sits down and writes.* ASLAKSEN *turns over a heap of newspapers on a chair R.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*entering from printing-room*]. Here I am, back again! [*Puts down his hat and stick.*]

Hovstad [*writing*]. Already, doctor? Make haste, Aslaksen. We've no time to lose to-day.

Dr. Stockmann [*to Aslaksen*]. No proofs yet, I hear.

Aslaksen [*without turning round*]. No; how could you think there would be?

Dr. Stockmann. Of course not; but you surely understand that I am impatient. I can have no rest or peace until I see the thing in print.

Hovstad. Hm! It'll take a good hour yet. Don't you think so, Aslaksen?

Aslaksen. I am almost afraid it will.

Dr. Stockmann. All right, all right, my good friends; then I'll look in again. I don't mind coming twice on such an errand. So great a cause—the welfare of the whole town; —upon my word, this is no time to be idle. [*Just going, but*

stops and comes back.] Oh! look here, there's one other thing I must talk to you about.

Hovstad. Excuse me. Wouldn't some other time——

Dr. Stockmann. I can tell you in two words. You see it's only this. When people read my statement in the paper to-morrow, and find I've spent the whole winter silently working for the good of the town——

Hovstad. Yes; but, doctor——

Dr. Stockmann. I know what you would say. You don't think it was a d—d bit more than my duty—my simple duty as a citizen. Of course I know that, just as well as you do. But you see, my fellow-citizens—good Lord! the kindly creatures think so much of me——

Aslaksen. Yes, your fellow-citizens did think very highly of you till to-day, doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. And that's exactly what I'm afraid of, that—*this* is what I wanted to say: when all this comes to them—especially to the poorer class—as a summons to take the affairs of the town into their own hands for the future——

Hovstad [*rising*]. Hm, doctor, I will not conceal from you——

Dr. Stockmann. Aha! I thought there was something a-brewing! But I won't hear of it. If they're going to get up anything——

Hovstad. How so?

Dr. Stockmann. Well, anything of any sort, a procession with banners, or a banquet, or a subscription for a testimonial—or whatever it may be, you must give me your solemn promise to put a stop to it. And you too, Mr. Aslaksen; do you hear?

Hovstad. Excuse me, doctor; we might as well tell you the whole truth first, as last——

[*Enter* MRS. STOCKMANN.]

Mrs. Stockmann [*seeing the doctor*]. Ah! just as I thought!

Hovstad [*going towards her*]. Hallo! Your wife, too?

Dr. Stockmann. What the devil have you come here for, Katrine?

Mrs. Stockmann. I should think you must know well enough what I've come for.

Hovstad. Won't you sit down? Or can——?

Mrs. Stockmann. Thanks; please do not trouble. And you mustn't be vexed with me for coming here to fetch Stockmann, for you must bear in mind I'm the mother of three children.

Dr. Stockmann. Stuff and nonsense! We all know that well enough!

Mrs. Stockmann. It doesn't look as if you were thinking very much about your wife and children to-day, or you'd not be so ready to plunge us all into misfortune.

Dr. Stockmann. Are you quite mad, Katrine! Mustn't a man with a wife and children proclaim the truth, do his utmost to be a useful and active citizen, do his duty by the town he lives in?

Mrs. Stockmann. Everything in moderation, Thomas.

Aslaksen. That's just what I say. Moderation in all things.

Mrs. Stockmann. And you are wronging us, Mr. Hovstad, when you entice my husband away from his house and home, and befool him with all this business.

Hovstad. I am not aware I have befooled anyone in——

Dr. Stockmann. Befool! Do you think I should let myself be made a fool of?

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, but you do. I know well that

you are the cleverest man in the town, but you so easily allow yourself to be taken in, Thomas. [*To* HOVSTAD.] And only think, he will lose his post at the Baths if you print what he has written.

Aslaksen. What!

Hovstad. Yes, but you know, doctor——

Dr. Stockmann [*laughing*]. Ha ha! just let them try! No, no, my dear, they daren't do it! I've the compact majority behind me, you see.

Mrs. Stockmann. That's just the misfortune that you have such an awful thing behind you.

Dr. Stockmann. Nonsense, Katrine;—you get home and see after the house, and let me take care of society. How can you be so afraid when I am so confident and happy. [*Rubbing his hands and walking up and down.*] Truth and the people must win the day; that you may be sure. Ah! I see the independent citizens gathering together as in triumphant host! [*Stopping by chair.*] Why, what the devil is that?

Aslaksen [*looking at it*]. Oh, Lord!

Hovstad [*the same*]. Hm!

Dr. Stockmann. Why, here's the top-knot of authority!

[*He takes the Burgomaster's official cap carefully between the tips of his fingers and holds it up.*]

Mrs. Stockmann. The Burgomaster's cap!

Dr. Stockmann. And here's the staff of office, too! But how the deuce did they——

Hovstad. Well then——

Dr. Stockmann. Ah! I understand. He's been here to talk you over. Ha! ha! He brought his pigs to the wrong market! And when he caught sight of me in the printing-room [*bursts out laughing*]—he took to his heels, Mr. Aslaksen?

Aslaksen [*hurriedly*]. Exactly; he took to his heels, doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Took to his heels without his stick and ——. Fiddle, faddle! Peter didn't make off without his belongings. But what the devil have you done with him? Ah!—in there, of course. Now you shall see, Katrine!

Mrs. Stockmann. Thomas, I beg you—— !

Aslaksen. Take care, doctor!

[DR. STOCKMANN *has put the Burgomaster's cap on and taken his stick: then he goes up, throws open the door, and makes a military salute. The Burgomaster enters, red with anger. Behind him enters* BILLING.]

Burgomaster. What is the meaning of this folly?

Dr. Stockmann. Be respectful, my good Peter. Now, it is I who am the highest authority in the town.

[*He struts up and down.*]

Mrs. Stockmann [*almost crying*]. But really, Thomas—— !

Burgomaster [*following him*]. Give me my cap and stick!

Dr. Stockmann [*as before*]. If you are the chief of police, I am the Burgomaster. I am master of the whole town, I tell you!

Burgomaster. Put down my cap, I say. Remember it is the official cap.

Dr. Stockmann. Pish! Do you think the awakening leonine people will allow themselves to be scared by an official cap? For you will see, we are going to have a revolution in the town to-morrow. You threatened to dismiss me, but now I dismiss you—dismiss you from all your offices of trust. You think I cannot do it?—Oh, yes, I can! I have the irresistible force of society with me. Hovstad and Billing will thunder forth in the *People's*

Messenger, and printer Aslaksen will come forward at the head of the whole Householders' Association——

Aslaksen. I shall not, doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Surely you will——

Burgomaster. Ah ha! Perhaps Mr. Hovstad is going to join the agitation?

Hovstad. No, Burgomaster.

Aslaksen. No, Mr. Hovstad is'nt such a fool as to ruin both himself and the paper for the sake of a fancy.

Dr. Stockmann [*looking about him*]. What does all this mean?

Hovstad. You have represented your case in a false light, doctor; and therefore I am not able to give you my support.

Billing. And after what the Burgomaster has been so kind as to tell me in there, I——

Dr. Stockmann. In a false light! Charge me with that, if you will, only print my paper; I am man enough to stand by it.

Hovstad. I shall not print it. I cannot, and will not, and dare not print it.

Dr. Stockmann. You dare not? What nonsense! You're editor, and I suppose it is the editor that directs his paper.

Aslaksen. No, it's the readers, doctor.

Billing. Luckily, it is.

Aslaksen. It is public opinion, the enlightened people, the householders, and all the rest. It is they who direct a paper.

Dr. Stockmann [*quietly*]. And all these powers I have against me?

Aslaksen. Yes, you have. It would be absolute ruin for the townspeople if your paper were printed.

Dr. Stockmann. So!

Burgomaster. My hat and stick. [DR. STOCKMANN *takes off his cap and lays it on the table. The Burgomaster takes them both.*] Your magisterial authority has come to an untimely end.

Dr. Stockmann. The end is not yet. [*To* HOVSTAD.] So it is quite impossible to print my paper in the *Messenger.*

Hovstad. Quite impossible; and for the sake of your family——

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh! please leave his family out of the question, Mr. Hovstad.

Burgomaster [*takes a manuscript from his jacket.*] This will be sufficient to enlighten the public, if you will print this: it is an authentic statement. Thanks.

Hovstad [*taking MS.*]. Good! I'll see it is inserted at once.

Dr. Stockmann. And not mine! You imagine you can silence me and the truth! But it won't be as easy as you think. Mr. Aslaksen, will you be good enough to print my MS. at once as a pamphlet—at my own cost—on my own responsibility. I'll take five hundred copies—no, I'll have six hundred.

Aslaksen. No. If you offered me its weight in gold I should not dare to lend my press to such a purpose, doctor. I must not, for the sake of public opinion. And you'll not get that printed anywhere in the whole town.

Dr. Stockmann. Then give it me back.

Hovstad [*handing him MS.*]. By all means.

Dr. Stockmann [*taking up his hat and cane*]. It shall be made public all the same. I'll read it at a mass meeting; all my fellow-citizens shall hear the voice of truth!

Burgomaster. There's not a society in the whole town that would let you their premises for such a purpose.

Aslaksen. Not a single one, I am certain.

Billing. No, God bless me, I should think not!

Mrs. Stockmann. That would be too shameful! But why are all these men against you?

Dr. Stockmann [*angrily*]. Ah! I'll tell you. It is because in this town all the men are old women—like you. They all think only of their families, and not of the general good.

Mrs. Stockmann [*taking his arm*]. Then I will show them how an—an old woman can be a man, for once in a way. For *now* I will stand by you, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Bravely said, Katrine! For on my soul the truth will out. If I can't make them let any hall, I'll hire a drum, and I'll march through the town with it; and I'll read my paper at every street corner.

Burgomaster. Surely you're not such an arrant fool as all that?

Dr. Stockmann. I am.

Aslaksen. There's not a single man in the whole town who would go with you.

Billing. No, God bless me, that there isn't.

Mrs. Stockmann. Do not give in, Thomas. I will send the boys with you.

Dr. Stockmann. That's a splendid idea!

Mrs. Stockmann. Morten will be so pleased to go; Ejlif will go too—he too.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and so will Petra. And you yourself, Katrine!

Mrs. Stockmann. No, no, not I. But I'll stand at the window and watch you—that I will do gladly.

Dr. Stockmann [*throwing his arms about her and kissing*

her]. Thanks, thanks. Now, my good sirs, we are ready for the fight! Now, we'll see if cowardice can close the mouth of a patriot who labours only for the common weal.

[*He and his wife go out together through door L. in flat.*]

Burgomaster [*shaking his head doubtfully*]. Now he's sent her mad too!

ACT IV.

A large old-fashioned room in CAPTAIN HORSTER'S *house. An open folding-door in the background leads to an ante-room. Three windows, left. About the middle of the opposite wall is a small platform seat, and on it a small table, two candles, a bottle of water, and a bell. The rest of the room is lighted by sconces placed between the windows. Left, near the front of the stage, is a table with a light on it, and by it a chair. In front, to the right, a door, and near it a few chairs. Large meeting of all classes of townsfolk. In the crowd are a few women and school-boys. More and more people stream in, until the room is quite full.*

1st Citizen [*to another standing near him*]. So you're here too, Lamstad?

2nd Citizen. I always go to every meeting.

A Bystander. I suppose you've brought your whistle?

2nd Citizen. Of course I have; haven't you?

3rd Citizen. Rather. And Skipper Evensen said he should bring a great big horn.

2nd Citizen. What a fellow that Evensen is! [*Laughter among the groups of Citizens.*]

4th Citizen [*joining them.*] I say, what's it all about? What's going on here to-night?

2nd Citizen. Why, it's Dr. Stockmann who is going to give a lecture against the Burgomaster.

4th Citizen. But the Burgomaster's his brother.

1st Citizen. That doesn't matter. Dr. Stockmann isn't afraid, he isn't.

3rd Citizen. But he's all wrong; they said so in the *People's Messenger*.

2nd Citizen. Yes, he must be wrong this time, for neither the Householders' Association nor the Citizens' Club would let him have a hall.

1st Citizen. They wouldn't even let him have a hall at the Baths.

2nd Citizen. No, you may be sure they wouldn't.

A Man [*in another group*]. Now, whom are we to go with in this affair? Hm!

Another Man [*in the same group*]. You just stick to Printer Aslaksen, and do what he does.

Billing [*with a portfolio writing-case under his arm, makes his way through the crowd*]. Excuse me, gentlemen. Will you allow me to pass? I am going to report for the *Messenger*. A thousand thanks. [*Sits by table L.*]

A Working-man. Who's he?

Another Working-man. Don't you know him? That's Billing, who writes for Aslaksen's paper.

[CAPTAIN HORSTER *enters, leading in* MRS. STOCKMANN *and* PETRA *by the right-hand door.* EJLIF *and* MORTEN *follow them.*]

Horster. I think you'll all be comfortable here. You can easily slip out if anything should happen.

Mrs. Stockmann. Do you think there will be any trouble?

Horster. One can never tell—with such a crowd. But do sit down, and don't be anxious.

Mrs. Stockmann [*sitting down*]. Ah! it was good of you to let Stockmann have this room.

Horster. Well, as no one else would, I——

Petra [*who has also seated herself*]. And it was brave too, Horster.

Horster. Shouldn't think it needed much courage.

[HOVSTAD *and* ASLAKSEN *enter at the same moment, but make their way through the crowd separately.*]

Aslaksen [*going towards Horster*]. Hasn't the doctor come yet?

Horster. He's waiting in there.

[*Movement at the door in the background.*]

Hovstad [*to Billing*]. There's the Burgomaster, look!

Billing. Yes, God bless me, if he has'nt come to the fore after all!

BURGOMASTER STOCKMANN *makes his way blandly through the meeting, bows politely, and stands by the wall L. Immediately after,* DR. STOCKMANN *enters from* 1*st R. Entrance. He is carefully dressed in frock-coat and white waist-coat. Faint applause, met by a subdued hiss. Then silence.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*in a low tone*]. Well, how do you feel, Katrine?

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh! I am all right. [*In a low voice.*] Now do, for once, keep your temper, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Oh! I can control myself well enough, dear. [*Looks at his watch, ascends the raised platform, and bows.*] It is a quarter past the time, so I will begin.

[*Takes out his MS.*]

Aslaksen. But I suppose a chairman must be elected first.

Dr. Stockmann. No; there's not the least necessity for that.

Several Gentlemen [*shouting*]. Yes, yes.

Burgomaster. I am also of opinion that a chairman should be elected.

Dr. Stockmann. But I have called this meeting to give a lecture, Peter!

Burgomaster. A lecture concerning the Baths may very possibly lead to divergence of opinion.

Several Voices in the crowd. A chairman! a chairman!

Hovstad. The general desire of the meeting seems to be for a chairman.

Dr. Stockmann [*controlling himself*]. Very well, then; let the meeting have its will.

Aslaksen. Will not the Burgomaster take the chair?

Three Gentlemen [*clapping.*] Bravo! Bravo.

Burgomaster. For several reasons, which I am sure you will understand, I must decline. But, fortunately, we have here in our midst one whom I think we all can accept. I allude to the president of the Householders' Association, Mr. Aslaksen.

Many Voices. Yes, yes! Long live Aslaksen! Three cheers for Aslaksen.

[DR. STOCKMANN *takes his MS. and descends from the platform.*]

Aslaksen. If I am called upon by the confidence of my fellow-citizens, I shall not be unwilling to——

[*Applause and cheers.* ASLAKSEN *ascends the platform.*]

Billing [*writing*]. So—"Mr. Aslaksen was elected with acclamation——"

Aslaksen. And now, as I have been called to the chair, I take the liberty of saying a few brief words. I am a quiet, peace-loving man; I am in favour of discreet moderation,

and of—and of moderate discretion. That everyone who knows me, knows.

Many Voices. Yes, yes, Aslaksen!

Aslaksen. I have learnt in the school of life and of experience that moderation is the virtue which best becomes a citizen——

Burgomaster. Hear, hear!

Aslaksen. ——and it is discretion and moderation, too, that best serve the community. I will therefore beg our respected fellow-citizen who has called this meeting to reflect upon this and to keep within the bounds of moderation.

A Man [*by the door*]. Three cheers for the Moderation Society.

A Voice. Go to the devil!

Voices. Hush! hush!

Aslaksen. No interruptions, gentlemen! Does anyone wish to offer any observations?

Burgomaster. Mr. Chairman!

Aslaksen. Burgomaster Stockmann will address the meeting.

Burgomaster. In consideration of my close relationship—of which you are probably aware—to the gentleman who is at present medical officer to the Baths, I should very much have preferred not to speak here this evening. But the position I hold at the Baths, and my anxiety with regard to matters of the utmost importance to the town, force me to move a resolution. I may, no doubt, assume that not a single citizen here present thinks it desirable that unreliable and exaggerated statements, as to the sanitary condition of the Baths and the town, should be disseminated over a wider area.

Many Voices. No, no, certainly not. We protest.

Burgomaster. I therefore beg to move, "That this meeting refuses to hear the medical officer of the Baths either lecture or speak upon the subject."

Dr. Stockmann [*flaming up*]. Refuses to hear—what nonsense!

Mrs. Stockmann coughing]. HIm! hm!

Dr. Stockmann [*controlling himself*]. Then I'm not to be heard.

Burgomaster. In my statement in the *People's Messenger* I have made the public acquainted with the most essential facts, so that all well-disposed citizens can easily draw their own conclusions. You will see from this that the medical officer's proposal—besides being a vote of censure against the leading men of the town—at bottom only means saddling the rate-paying inhabitants of the town with an unnecessary expense of at least a hundred thousand crowns.

[*Noise and some hissing.*]

Aslaksen [*ringing the bell*]. Order, gentlemen! I must take the liberty of supporting the Burgomaster's resolution. It is also *my* opinion there is something beneath the surface of the doctor's agitation. He speaks of the Baths, but it is a revolution he is trying to bring about; he wants to place the municipal government of the town in other hands. No one doubts the intentions of Dr. Stockmann—God forbid! there can't be two opinions as to that. I, too, am in favour of self-government by the people, if only the cost do not fall too heavily upon the ratepayers. But in this case it would do so, and for this reason I—d—n it all—I beg your pardon—I cannot go with Dr. Stockmann upon this occasion. You can buy even gold at too high a price; that's my opinion. [*Loud applause on all sides*].

Hovstad. I also feel bound to explain my attitude. In the beginning, Dr. Stockmann's agitation found favour in

several quarters, and I supported it as impartially as I could. But when we found we had allowed ourselves to be misled by a false statement——

Dr. Stockmann. False!

Hovstad. Well, then, a somewhat unreliable statement. The Burgomaster's report has proved this. I trust no one here present doubts my liberal principles; the attitude of the *Messenger* on all great political questions is well known to you all. But I have learned from experienced and thoughtful men that in purely local matters a paper must observe a certain amount of caution.

Aslaksen. I quite agree with the speaker.

Hovstad. And in the matter under discussion it is evident that Dr. Stockmann has public opinion against him. But, gentlemen, what is the first and foremost duty of an editor? Is it not to work in harmony with his readers? Has he not in some sort received a silent mandate to further assiduously and unweariedly the well-being of his constituents? or am I mistaken in this?

Many Voices. No, no, no! Hovstad is right.

Hovstad. It has cost me a bitter struggle to break with a man in whose house I have of late been a frequent guest—with a man who up to this day has enjoyed the universal goodwill of his fellow-citizens—with a man whose only, or at any rate, whose chief fault is that he consults his heart rather than his head.

A few scattered voices. That's true! Three cheers for Dr. Stockmann.

Hovstad. But my duty towards the community has forced me to break with him. Then, too, there is another consideration that compels me to oppose him, to stay him if possible from the fatal descent upon which he is entering: consideration for his family——

Dr. Stockmann. Keep to the water-works and the sewers!

Hovstad. ——consideration for his wife and his unprovided-for children.

Morten. Is that us, mother?

Mrs. Stockmann. Hush!

Aslaksen. I will now put the Burgomaster's resolution to the vote.

Dr. Stockmann. It is not necessary. I haven't the slightest intention of speaking of all the filth at the Baths. No! You shall hear something quite different.

Burgomaster [*aside*]. What nonsense has he got hold of now?

A Drunken Man [*at the main entrance*]. I'm a duly qualified ratepayer! And so I've a right to my opinion! My full, firm opinion is that——

Several Voices. Silence, up there.

Others. He's drunk! Turn him out!

[*The drunken man is put out.*]

Dr. Stockmann. Can I speak?

Aslaksen [*ringing the bell*]. Dr. Stockmann will address the meeting.

Dr. Stockmann. I should have liked to see anyone, but a few days ago, dare to make such an attempt to gag me as has been made here to-night! I would then have fought like a lion in defence of my holiest rights as a man. But now all this is quite indifferent to me, for now I have more important things to speak of. [*The people crowd closer round him.* MORTEN KIIL *is now seen among the bystanders.* Dr. STOCKMANN *continues.*] During the last few days I have thought, reflected much, have pondered upon so many things, till, at last, my head seemed to be in a whirl——

Burgomaster [*coughing*]. Hm!

Dr. Stockmann ——but then I began to see things clearly; then I saw to the very bottom of the whole matter. And that is why I stand here this evening. I am about to make a great revelation to you, fellow-citizens! I am going to disclose that to you which is of infinitely more moment than the unimportant fact that our water-works are poisonous, and that our Hygienic Baths are built upon a soil teeming with pestilence.

Many Voices [*shouting*]. Don't speak about the Baths! We won't listen to that! Shut up about that!

Dr. Stockmann. I have said I should speak of the great discovery I have made within the last few days—the discovery that all our spiritual sources of life are poisoned, and that our whole bourgeois society rests upon a soil teeming with the pestilence of lies.

Several Voices [*in astonishment and half aloud*]. What is he saying?

Burgomaster. Such an insinuation——

Aslaksen [*with hand on bell*]. I must call upon the speaker to moderate his expressions.

Dr. Stockmann. I have loved my native town as dearly as man could love the home of his childhood. I was not old when I left our town, and distance, privations, and memory threw, as it were, a strange glamour over the town and its people. [*Some clapping and cheers of approval.*] Then for years I found myself stranded in an out-of-the-way corner in the north. Whenever I met any of the poor folk who lived there, hemmed in by rocks, it seemed to me, many a time, that it would have been better for these poor degraded creatures if they had had a cattle doctor to attend them instead of a man like me. [*Murmurs in the room.*]

Billing [*laying down his pen*]. God bless me! but I've never heard——

Hovstad. It is an insult to an estimable peasantry.

Dr. Stockmann. One moment! I do not think anyone can reproach me with forgetting my native town up there. I brooded over my eggs like an eider duck, and what I hatched—were plans for the Baths here. [*Applause and interruptions.*] And when, at last, after a long time, fate arranged all things so well and happily for me that I could come home again—then, fellow-citizens, it seemed to me that I hadn't another wish upon earth. Yes; I had the one ardent, constant, burning desire to be useful to the place of my birth, and to the people here.

Burgomaster [*looking into vacancy*]. The method is rather extraordinary—hm!

Dr. Stockmann. And when I came here I rejoiced blindly in my happy illusions. But yesterday morning—no, it was really two evenings ago—the eyes of my mind were opened wide, and the first thing I saw was the extraordinary stupidity of the authorities.

[*Noise, cries, and laughter.* MRS. STOCKMANN *coughs zealously.*]

Burgomaster. Mr. Chairman!

Aslaksen [*ringing bell*]. In virtue of my office——!

Dr. Stockmann. It is mean to catch me up on a word, Mr. Aslaksen. I only meant that I became aware of the extraordinary muddling of which the leading men have been guilty down there at the Baths. I detest leading men—I've seen enough of these gentry in my time. They are like goats in a young plantation: they do harm everywhere; they stand in the path of a free man wherever he turns—and I should be glad if we could exterminate them like other noxious animals——

[*Uproar in the room.*]

Burgomaster. Mr. Chairman, can such an expression be permitted.

Aslaksen [*with one hand on shelf*]. Doctor Stockmann——!

Dr. Stockmann. I can't conceive how it is that I only now have seen through these gentry; for haven't I had a magnificent example before my eyes daily here in the town—my brother Peter—slow in grasping new ideas, tenacious in prejudice——

[*Laughter, noise, and whistling.* MRS. STOCKMANN *coughs.* ASLAKSEN *rings violently.*]

The Drunken Man [*who has come in again*]. Do you mean me? Sure, enough, my name is Petersen, but d—n me if——

Angry Voices. Out with that drunken man. Turn him out.

[*The man is again turned out.*]

Burgomaster. Who is that person?

A Bystander. I don't know him, Burgomaster.

Another. He doesn't belong to this town.

A third. Probably he's a loafer from—— [*The rest is inaudible.*]

Aslaksen. The man was evidently intoxicated with Bavarian beer. Continue, Dr. Stockmann, but do strive to be moderate.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, fellow-citizens, I will say no more about our leading men. If anyone imagines, from what I have said here, that I want to exterminate these gentlemen to-night, he is mistaken—altogether mistaken. For I cherish the comforting belief that these laggards, these old remnants of a decaying world of thought, are doing this admirably for themselves. They need no doctor's help to hasten their end. Nor, indeed, is it this sort of people that are the most serious danger of society; it is not they who are the most effective in poisoning our spiritual life

or making pestilential the ground beneath our feet; it is not they who are the most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom in our society.

Cries from all sides. Who, then? Who is it? Name, name.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, you may be sure I will name them! For *this* is the great discovery I made yesterday! [*In a louder tone.*] The most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom in our midst are the compact majority. Yes, the d—d, compact, liberal majority—they it is! Now you know it.

[*Immense noise in the room. Most are shouting, stamping, and whistling. Several elderly gentlemen exchange stolen glances and seem amused.* MRS. STOCKMANN *rises nervously.* EJLIF *and* MORTEN *advance threateningly towards the school-boys, who are making a noise.* ASLAKSEN *rings the bell and calls for order.* HOVSTAD *and* BILLING *both speak, but nothing can be heard. At last quiet is restored.*]

Aslasken. The chairman expects the speaker to withdraw his thoughtless remarks.

Dr. Stockmann. Never, Mr. Aslasken. For it is this great majority of our society that robs me of my freedom, and wants to forbid me to speak the truth.

Hovstad. Right is always on the side of the majority.

Billing. Yes, and the truth too, God bless me!

Dr. Stockmann. The majority is never right. Never, I say. That is one of those conventional lies against which a free, thoughtful man must rebel. Who are they that make up the majority of a country? Is it the wise men or the foolish? I think we must agree that the foolish folk are, at present, in a terribly overwhelming majority all

around and about us the wide world over. But, devil take it, it can surely never be right that the foolish should rule over the wise! [*Noise and shouts.*] Yes, yes, you can shout me down, but you cannot gainsay me. The majority has might—unhappily—but right it has not. I and a few others are right. The minority is always right.

[*Much noise again.*]

Hovstad. Ha! ha! So Dr. Stockmann has turned aristocrat since the day before yesterday!

Dr. Stockmann. I have said that I will not waste a word on the little, narrow-chested, short-winded crew that lie behind us. Pulsating life has nothing more to do with them. But I do think of the few individuals among us who have made all the new, germinating truths their own. These men stand, as it were, at the outposts, so far in advance that the compact majority has not yet reached them—and *there* they fight for truths that are too lately borne into the world's consciousness to have won over the majority.

Hovstad. So the doctor is a revolutionist now.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, by Heaven, I am, Mr. Hovstad! For I am going to revolt against the lie that truth resides in the majority. What sort of truths are those that the majority is wont to take up? Truths so full of years that they are decrepit. When a truth is as old as that it is in a fair way to become a lie, gentlemen. [*Laughter and interruption.*] Yes, yes, you may believe me or not; but truths are by no means wiry Methusalahs, as some people think. A normally-constituted truth lives—let me say—as a rule, seventeen or eighteen years, at the outside twenty years, seldom longer. But truths so stricken in years are always shockingly thin. And yet it is only then that a majority takes them up and recommends them to

society as wholesome food. But I can assure you there is not much nutritious matter in this sort of fare; and as a doctor I know something about it. All these majority-truths are like last year's salt pork; they are like rancid, mouldy ham, producing all the moral scrofula that devastates society.

Aslaksen. It seems to me that the honourable speaker is wandering very considerably from the subject.

Burgomaster. I quite agree with the chairman.

Dr. Stockmann. I really think you quite mad, Peter! I am keeping as closely to the subject as I possibly can, for what I am speaking of is only this—that the masses, the majority, that d—d compact majority—it is they, I say, who are poisoning our spiritual life, and making pestilential the ground beneath our feet.

Hovstad. And this the great, independent, majority of the people do, just because they are sensible enough to reverence only assured and acknowledged truths?

Dr. Stockmann. Ah! my dear Mr. Hovstad, don't talk so glibly about assured truths! The truths acknowledged by the masses, the multitude, are truths that the advanced guard thought assured in the days of our grandfathers. We, the fighters at the out-posts nowadays, we no longer acknowledge them, and I don't believe that there is any other assured truth but this—that society cannot live, and live wholesomely, upon such old, marrowless, lifeless truths as these.

Hovstad. But instead of all this vague talk it would be more interesting to learn what are these old, lifeless truths which we are living upon.

[*Approving applause generally.*]

Dr. Stockmann. Ah! I couldn't go over the whole heap of abominations; but to begin with, I'll just keep to one

acknowledged truth, which at bottom is a hideous lie, but which, all the same, Mr. Hovstad, and the *Messenger*, and all adherents of the *Messenger* live upon.

Hovstad. And that is——?

Dr. Stockmann. That is the doctrine that you have inherited from our forefathers, and that you heedlessly proclaim far and wide—the doctrine that the multitude, the vulgar herd, the masses, are the pith of the people—that, indeed, they are the people—that the common man, that this ignorant, undeveloped member of society has the same right to condemn or to sanction, to govern and to rule, as the few people of intellectual power.

Billing. Now really, God bless me——

Hovstad [*shouting at the same time*]. Citizens, please note that!

Angry Voices. Ho, ho! Aren't we the people? Is it only the grand folk who're to govern?

A Working-man. Turn out the fellow who stands there talking such twaddle.

Others. Turn him out!

A Citizen [*shouting*]. Blow your horn, Evensen.

[*Loud hooting, whistling, and terrific noise in the room.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*when the noise had somewhat subsided*]. Now do be reasonable! Can't you bear to hear the voice of truth for once? Why, I don't ask you all to agree with me straight away. But I did certainly expect that Mr. Hovstad would be on my side, if he would but be true to himself. For Mr. Hovstad claims to be a free-thinker——

Several Voices ask wondering [*in a low voice*]. Free-thinker, did he say. What? Editor Hovstad a free-thinker?

Hovstad [*shouting*]. Prove it, Dr. Stockmann! When have I said that in print?

Dr. Stockmann [*reflecting*]. No; by Heaven, you're right there. You've never had the frankness to do that. Well, I won't get you into a scrape, Mr. Hovstad. Let me be the free-thinker then. For now I'll prove, and on scientific grounds, that the *Messenger* is leading you all by the nose shamefully, when it tells you that you, that the masses, the vulgar herd, are the true pith of the people. You see that is only a newspaper lie. The masses are nothing but the raw material that must be fashioned into the people. [*Murmurs, laughter, and noise in the room.*] Is it not so with all other living creatures on earth? How great the difference between a cultivated and an uncultivated breed of animals! Only look at a common barn hen. What sort of meat do you get from such a skinny animal? Nothing to boast of! And what sort of eggs does it lay? A fairly decent crow or raven can lay eggs nearly as good. Then take a cultivated Spanish or Japanese hen, or take a fine pheasant or turkey—ah! then you see the difference. And then I take the dog, man's closest ally. Think first of an ordinary common cur—I mean one of those loathsome, ragged, low mongrels, that haunt the streets, and are a nuisance to everybody. And place such a mongrel by the side of a poodle dog, who for many generations has been bred from a well-known strain, who has lived on delicate food, and has heard harmonious voices and music. Don't you believe that the brain of a poodle has developed quite differently from that of a mongrel? Yes, you may depend upon that! It is educated poodles like this that jugglers train to perform the most extraordinary tricks. A common peasant-cur could never learn anything of the sort—not if he tried till Doomsday.

[*Laughing and chaffing are heard all round.*]

A Citizen [*shouting*]. Do you want to make dogs of us now?

Another Man. We are not animals, doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, on my soul, but we are animals, old fellow! We're one and all of us as much animals as one could wish. But, truly, there aren't many distinguished animals among us. Ah! there is a terrible difference between men—poodles and men-mongrels. And the ridiculous part of it is, that Editor Hovstad quite agrees with me so long as we speak of four-footed animals——

Hovstad. Oh! do drop them!

Dr. Stockmann. All right! but so soon as I apply the law to the two-legged, Mr. Hovstad is up in arms; then he no longer dares to stick to his own opinions, he does not dare to think out his own thoughts to their logical end; then he turns his whole doctrines upside down, and proclaims in the *People's Messenger* that barn-yard hens and gutter mongrels are precisely the finest specimens in the menagerie. But it is always thus so long as you haven't work'd the vulgarity out of your system, and fought your way up to spiritual distinction.

Hovstad. I make no kind of pretensions to any sort of distinction. I come from simple peasants, and I am proud that my root lies deep down among the masses, who are being jeered at now.

Several Workmen. Three cheers for Hovstad! Hurrah! hurrah!

Dr. Stockmann. The sort of people I am speaking of you don't find only in the lower classes; they crawl and swarm all around us—up to the very highest classes of society. Why, only look at your own smug, smart Burgomaster! Truly, my brother Peter is as much one of the vulgar herd as any man walking on two legs.

[*Laughter and hisses.*]

Burgomaster. I beg to protest against such personal allusions.

Dr. Stockmann [*imperturbably*]. ——and that not because he—like myself—is descended from a good-for-nothing old pirate of Pomerania, or somewhere thereabouts—yes, for that we are so——

Burgomaster. Absurd tradition! Has been refuted!

Dr. Stockmann. ——but he is so because he thinks the thoughts of his forefathers, and holds the opinions of his forefathers. The people who do this, *they* belong to the unintellectual mob;—see—that's why my pretentious brother Peter is at bottom so utterly without refinement,—and consequently so illiberal.

Burgomaster. Mr. Chairman——

Hovstad. So that the distinguished persons in this country are liberals? That's quite a new theory.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, that too is part of my new discovery. And you shall hear *this* also; that free thought is almost precisely the same thing as morality. And therefore I say that it is altogether unpardonable of the *Messenger* to proclaim day after day the false doctrine that it is the masses and the multitude, the compact majority, that monopolise free thought and morality,—and that vice and depravity and all spiritual filth are only the oozings from education, as all the filth down there by the Baths oozes out from the Mill Dale Tan-works! [*Noise and interruptions.* DR. STOCKMANN *goes on imperturbably smiling in his eagerness.*] And yet this same *Messenger* can still preach about the masses and the many being raised to a higher level of life! But, in the devil's name—if the doctrine of the *Messenger* holds good, why, then, this raising up of the masses would be synonymous with hurling them into destruction! But, happily, it is only an old hereditary lie

that education demoralises. No, it is stupidity, poverty, the ugliness of life, that do this devil's work! In a house that isn't aired, and whose floors are not swept every day—my wife Katrine maintains that the floors ought to be scrubbed too, but we can't discuss that now;—well,—in such a house, I say, within two or three years, people lose the power of thinking or acting morally. A deficiency of oxygen enervates the conscience. And it would seem there's precious little oxygen in many and many a house here in the town, since the whole compact majority is unscrupulous enough to be willing to build up the prosperity of the town upon a quagmire of lies and fraud.

Aslaksen. I cannot allow so gross an insult, levelled at all the citizens here present.

A Gentleman. I move that the chairman order the speaker to sit down.

Eager Voices. Yes, yes, that's right! Sit down! Sit down!

Dr. Stockmann [*flaring up*]. Then I will proclaim the truth from the house-tops! I'll write to other newspapers outside the town! The whole land shall know how matters are ordered here.

Hovstad. It would almost seem as if the doctor wanted to ruin the town.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, I love my native town so well I would rather ruin it than see it flourishing upon a lie.

Aslaksen. That is speaking strongly

[*Noise and whistling.* MRS. STOCKMANN *coughs in vain; the doctor no longer heeds her.*]

Hovstad [*shouting amid the tumult*]. The man who would ruin a whole community must be an enemy of society!

Dr. Stockmann [*with growing excitement*]. It doesn't

matter if a lying community is ruined! It must be levelled to the ground, I say! All men who live upon lies must be exterminated like vermin! You'll poison the whole country in time; you'll bring it to such a pass that the whole country will deserve to perish. And should it come to this, I say, from the bottom of my heart: Perish the country! Perish all its people!

A Man [*in the crowd*]. Why, he talks like a regular enemy of the people!

Billing. There, God bless me! spoke the voice of the people!

Many shouting. Yes! yes! yes! He's an enemy of the people! He hates the country! He hates the people!

Aslaksen. Both as a citizen of this town and as a man, I am deeply shocked at what I have been obliged to listen to here. Dr. Stockmann has unmasked himself in a manner I should never have dreamt of. I am reluctantly forced to subscribe to the opinion just expressed by a worthy citizen, and I think we ought to give expression to this opinion. I therefore beg to propose, "That this meeting is of opinion that the medical officer of the Bath, Dr. Thomas Stockmann, is an enemy of the people."

[*Thunders of applause and cheers. Many form a circle round the doctor and hoot at him.* MRS. STOCKMANN *and* PETRA *have risen.* MORTEN *and* EJLIF *fight the other school-boys who have also been hooting. Some grown-up persons separate them.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*to the people hooting*]. Ah! fools, that you are! I tell you that——

Aslaksen [*ringing*]. The doctor is out of order in speaking. A regular vote must be taken, and out of consideration for the feelings of those present the vote will be taken

in writing and without names. Have you any blank paper, Mr. Billing?

Billing. Here's both blue and white paper——

Aslaksen. That'll do. We shall manage more quickly this way. Tear it up. That's it. [*To the meeting.*] Blue means no, white means yes. I will myself go round and collect the votes.

[*The Burgomaster leaves the room.* ASLAKSEN *and a few citizens go round with pieces of paper in hats.*]

A Gentleman [*to Hovstad*]. Whatever is up with the doctor? What does it all mean?

Hovstad. Why, you know how irrepressible he is.

Another Gentleman [*to Billing*]. I say, you're intimate with him. Have you ever noticed if he drinks?

Billing. God bless me! I really don't know what to say. Toddy is always on the table whenever anyone calls.

3rd Gentleman. No, I rather think he's not always right in his head.

1st Gentleman. Yes—I wonder if madness is hereditary in the family?

Billing. I shouldn't wonder.

4th Gentleman. No, it's pure jealousy. He wants to be over the heads of the rest.

Billing. A few days ago he certainly was talking about a rise in his salary, but he did not get it.

All the Gentlemen [*together*]. Ah! that explains everything.

The Drunken Man [*in the crowd*]. I want a blue one, I do! And I'll have a white one too!

People call out. There's the drunken man again! Turn him out!

Morten Kiil [*coming near to the doctor*]. Well, Stockmann, do you see now what this tomfoolery leads to?

Dr. Stockmann. I have done my duty.

Morten Kiil. What was that you said about the Mill Dale Tanneries?

Dr. Stockmann. Why, you heard what I said; that all the filth comes from them.

Morten Kiil. From my tannery as well?

Dr. Stockmann. Unfortunately, your tannery is the worst of all.

Morten Kiil. Will you put that into the papers too?

Dr. Stockmann. I never keep anything back.

Morten Kiil. That may cost you dear, Stockmann!

[*Exit.*]

A Fat Gentleman [*goes up to Horster without bowing to the ladies*]. Well, Captain, so you lend your house to an enemy of the people.

Horster. I suppose I can do as I please with my own, sir.

The Merchant. Then, of course, you can have no objection if I do the same with mine?

Horster. What do you mean, sir?

The Merchant. You shall hear from me to-morrow.

[*Turns away, and exit.*]

Petra. Wasn't that the shipowner?

Horster. Yes, that was Merchant Vik.

Aslaksen [*with the voting papers in his hands, ascends the platform and rings*]. Gentlemen! I have to acquaint you with the result of the vote. All, with one exception——

A Young Gentleman. That's the drunken man!

Aslaksen. With one exception—a tipsy man—this meeting of citizens declares the medical officer of the Baths, Dr. Thomas Stockmann, an enemy of the people. [*Cheers*

and applause.] Three cheers for our honourable old community of citizens! [*Applause.*] Three cheers for our able and energetic Burgomaster, who has so loyally put on one side the claims of kindred! [*Cheers.*] The meeting is dissolved. [*He descends.*]

Billing. Three cheers for the chairman!

All. Hurrah for Printer Aslaksen!

Dr. Stockmann. My hat and coat, Petra! Captain, have you room for passengers to the new world?

Horster. For you and yours, doctor, we'll make room.

Dr. Stockmann [*while Petra helps him on with his coat*]. Good! Come, Katrine! come, boys!

[*He gives his wife his arm.*]

Mrs. Stockmann. [*in a low voice*]. Dear Thomas, let us go out by the back way.

Dr. Stockmann. No back ways, Katrine! [*In a louder voice.*] You shall hear of the enemy of the people before he shakes the dust from his feet! I'm not so forgiving as a certain person: I don't say I forgive you, for you know not what you do.

Aslaksen [*shouting*]. That is a blasphemous comparison, Dr. Stockmann!

Billing. It is, God bl—— A serious man can't stand that!

A Coarse Voice. And he threatens us into the bargain!

Angry Cries. Let's smash the windows in his house Let's give him a ducking!

A Man [*in the crowd*]. Blow your horn, Evensen Ta-rata ra-ra!

[*Horn-blowing, whistling, and wild shouting. The doctor, with his family, goes towards the door.* HORSTER *makes way for them.*]

All [*shouting after them as they go out*]. Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people!

Billing. Well, God bless me if I'd drink toddy at Doctor Stockmann's to-night!

The people throng towards the door; the noise is heard without from the street beyond; cries of "Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people!"]

ACT V.

[DR. STOCKMANN'S *Study. Bookcases and various preparations along the walls. In the background, a door leading to the ante-room; to the left first entrance, a door to the sitting-room. In wall right are two windows, all the panes of which are smashed. In the middle of the room is the doctor's writing-table, covered with books and papers. The room is in disorder. It is morning.* DR. STOCKMANN, *in dressing-gown, slippers, and skull-cap, is bending down and raking with an umbrella under one of the cabinets; at last he rakes out a stone.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*speaking through the sitting-room door*]. Katrine, I've found another one.

Mrs. Stockmann [*in the sitting-room*]. Ah! you're sure to find lots more.

Dr. Stockmann [*placing the stone on a pile of others on the table*]. I shall keep these stones as sacred relics. Ejlif and Morten shall see them every day, and when they are grown men they shall inherit them from me. [*Poking under the*

bookcase.] Hasn't—what the devil's her name?—the girl—hasn't she been for the glazier yet?

Mrs. Stockmann [*coming in*]. Yes, but he said he didn't know whether he'd be able to come to-day.

Dr. Stockmann. You'll see he daren't come.

Mrs. Stockmann. Well, Rudine also thought he didn't dare to come, because of the neighbours. [*Speaks through sitting-room door*]. What is it, Rudine?—All right. [*Goes in and returns again immediately.*] Here's a letter for you, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Let's see. [*Opens letter and reads.*] Ah, ha!

Mrs. Stockmann. Whom is it from?

Dr. Stockmann. From the landlord. He gives us notice.

Mrs. Stockmann. Is it possible? Such a pleasantly-behaved man.

Dr. Stockmann [*looking at the letter*]. He daren't do otherwise, he says. He is very loath to do it; but he daren't do otherwise on account of his fellow-citizens, out of respect for public opinion—is in a dependent position—does not dare to offend certain influential men——

Mrs. Stockmann. There, you can see now, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, yes, I see well enough; they are cowards, every one of them cowards in this town; no one dares do anything for fear of all the rest. [*Throws letter on table.*] But that's all the same to us, Katrine. Now we're journeying to the new world, and so——

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, but, Thomas, is that idea of the journey really well-advised?

Dr. Stockmann. Perhaps you'd have me stay here where they have gibbeted me as an enemy of the people, branded me, and smashed my windows to atoms? And look here, Katrine, they have torn a hole in my black trousers.

Mrs. Stockmann. Oh dear, and they're the best you've got.

Dr. Stockmann. One ought never to put on one's best trousers when one goes fighting for liberty and truth. Of course, you know I don't care so much about the trousers; you can always patch them up for me. But it is that the mob should dare to attack me as if they were my equals—*that's* what, for the life of me, I can't stomach.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, they've been very insolent to you here, Thomas; but must we leave the country altogether on that account?

Dr. Stockmann. Don't you think the plebeians are just as impertinent in other towns as here? Ah, yes, they are, my dear; they're pretty much of a muchness everywhere. Well, never mind, let the curs snap; *that* is not the worst; the worst is that all men are party slaves all the land over. Nor is it *that*—perhaps that's no better in the free west either; there, too, the compact majority thrives, and enlightened public opinion and all the other devil's trash flourishes. But you see the conditions are on a larger scale there than here; they may lynch you, but they don't torture you; they don't put the screw on a free soul there as they do at home here. And then, if need be, you can live apart. [*Walks up and down.*] If I only knew whether there were any primeval forest, any little South Sea island to be bought cheap——

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, but the boys, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann [*standing still*]. What an extraordinary woman you are, Katrine! Would you prefer the boys to grow up amid such a society as ours? Why, you saw yourself yesterday evening that one half of the population is quite mad, and if the other half hasn't lost its reason, that's because they're hounds who haven't any reason to lose.

Mrs. Stockmann. But really, dear Thomas, you do say such impudent things!

Dr. Stockmann. Well! But isn't what I say the truth? Don't they turn all ideas upside down? Don't they stir up right and wrong in one mess of potage? Don't they call lies what I know to be truth? But the maddest thing of all is that there are a whole mass of grown men, Liberals, who go about persuading themselves and others that they are free! Did you ever hear anything like it, Katrine?

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, yes, it is certainly quite mad. But—— [PETRA *enters from sitting-room*]. Back from school already?

Petra. Yes, I've been dismissed.

Mrs. Stockmann. Dismissed?

Dr. Stockmann. You, too!

Petra. Mrs. Busk gave me notice, and so I thought it would be best to leave there and then.

Dr. Stockmann. On my soul you did right!

Mrs. Stockmann. Who could have thought Mrs. Busk was such a bad woman?

Petra. Oh! Mother, Mrs. Busk isn't really so bad; I saw clearly how much it pained her. But she didn't dare to do otherwise, she said; and so I'm dismissed.

Dr. Stockmann [*laughing and rubbing his hands*]. She dared not do otherwise, she too! Ah! that's delicious.

Mrs. Stockmann. Ah! well! after the dreadful uproar last night——

Petra. It wasn't only that. Now you shall hear, father!

Dr. Stockmann. Well?

Petra. Mrs. Busk showed me no less than three letters she had received this morning.

Dr. Stockmann. Anonymous, of course?

Petra. Yes.

Dr. Stockmann. They didn't dare to give their names, Katrine——!

Petra. And two of them wrote that a gentleman who frequently visits our house, said at the club last night that I had such extremely advanced opinions upon various matters.

Dr. Stockmann. And, of course, you didn't deny that?

Petra. Of course not. You know Mrs. Busk herself has pretty advanced opinions when we are alone together; but now this has come out about me she didn't dare keep me on.

Mrs. Stockmann. And to think—it was one who came to our house! There, now, you see, Thomas, what comes of all your hospitality.

Dr. Stockmann. We won't live any longer amid such foulness. Pack up as quickly as you can, Katrine; let us get away—the sooner the better.

Mrs. Stockmann. Hush! I think there's some one outside in the passage. Just see, Petra.

Petra [*opening door*]. Ah! is it you, Captain Horster? Please come in.

Horster [*from the ante-room*]. Good morning. I thought I must just look in and see how you're getting on.

Dr. Stockmann [*holding out his hand*]. Thanks; that's very beautiful of you.

Mrs. Stockmann. And thanks for seeing us home, Captain Horster.

Petra. But, however did you get back again?

Horster. Oh! that was all right. You know I'm pretty strong, and these folk's bark is worse than their bite.

Dr. Stockmann. Isn't it marvellous, this piggish cowardice? Come here, I want to show you something! See, here are all the stones they threw in at us. Only look at

them! Upon my soul there aren't more than two decent big fighting stones in the whole lot; the rest are nothing but pebbles—mere nothings. And yet they stood down there, and yelled, and swore they'd slay me—the corrupt one;—but for deeds, for deeds—there's not much of that in this town!

Horster. Well, that was a good thing for you this time, anyhow, doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Of course it was. But its vexatious all the same; for should it ever come to a serious, really important struggle, you'll see, Captain Horster, that public opinion will take to its heels, and the compact majority will make for the sea like a herd of swine. It is *this* that is so sad to think of; it grieves me to the very heart.—No, deuce take it—at the bottom all this is folly. They've said I am an enemy of the people; well then, I'll be an enemy of the people.

Mrs. Stockmann. You will never be that, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. You'd better not take your oath of it, Katrine. A bad name may work like a pin's prick in the lungs. And that d—d word—I can't get rid of it; it has sunk into my diaphragm—there it lies, and gnaws, and sucks like some acid. And magnesia is no good against that.

Petra. Pshaw! You should only laugh at them, father.

Horster. The people will think differently yet, doctor.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, Thomas, you may be as sure of that as you're standing here.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes—perhaps when it is too late. Well, much good may it do them! Let them go on wallowing here in the mire, and repent that they have driven a patriot into exile. When do you sail, Captain Horster?

Horster. Hm!—it was really that I came to speak to you about——

Dr. Stockmann. Has anything gone wrong with the ship?

Horster. No; but it's like this, I'm not going with it.

Petra. Surely you have not been dismissed?

Horster (*smiling*). Yes, I have.

Petra. You too!

Mrs. Stockmann. There you see, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. And for truth's sake! Ah! had I thought such a thing——

Horster. You musn't take it to heart; I shall soon get a berth with some other company.

Dr. Stockmann. And this Merchant Vik! A wealthy man, independent of anyone! Good Heavens——

Horster. In other matters he is a thoroughly fair man, and he says himself he would gladly have kept me on if only he dared

Dr. Stockmann. But he didn't dare—that goes without saying.

Horster. It wasn't easy, he said, when you belong to a party——

Dr. Stockmann. That was a true saying of the honourable man's! A party is like a sausage-machine; it grinds all the heads together in one mash; and that's why there are so many blockheads and fat heads all seething together!

Mrs Stockmann. Now really, Thomas!

Petra [*to Horster*]. If only you hadn't seen us home perhaps it would not have come to this.

Horster. I don't regret it

Petra [*holding out her hands*]. Thank you for that!

Horster [*to Dr. Stockmann*]. And so what I wanted to say to you was this: that if you really want to leave I have thought of another way——

Dr. Stockmann. That is good—if only we can get off——

Mrs. Stockmann. Sh! Isn't that a knock?

Petra. I'm sure that's uncle.

Dr. Stockmann. Aha! [*Calls.*] Come in.

Mrs. Stockmann. Dear Thomas, now do for once promise me——

[*Enter Burgomaster from ante-room.*]

Burgomaster (*in the doorway*). Oh! you're engaged. Then I'd better——

Dr. Stockmann. No, no; come in.

Burgomaster. But I wanted to speak with you alone.

Mrs. Stockmann. We'll go into the sitting-room.

Horster. And I'll look in again presently.

Dr. Stockmann. No, no, go with them, Captain Horster, I must have further information——

Horster. All right, then I'll wait.

[*He follows* MRS. STOCKMANN *and* PETRA *into the sitting-room. The Burgomaster says nothing, but casts glances at the windows.*]

Dr. Stockmann. Perhaps you find it rather drafty here to-day? Put your hat on.

Burgomaster. Thanks, if I may [*puts on hat*]. I fancy I caught cold yesterday evening. I stood there shivering.

Dr. Stockmann. Really? I should have said it was pretty warm.

Burgomaster. I regret that it was not in my power to prevent these nocturnal excesses.

Dr. Stockmann. Have you nothing else to say to me?

Burgomaster [*producing a large letter*]. I've this document for you from the Directors of the Baths.

Dr. Stockmann. I am dismissed?

Burgomaster. Yes; from to-day. [*Places letter on table.*] We are very sorry—but frankly, we dared not do otherwise on account of public opinion.

Dr. Stockmann [*smiling*]. Dared not? I've heard that word already to-day.

Burgomaster. I beg of you to understand your position clearly. You must not, for the future, count upon any sort of practice in the town here.

Dr. Stockmann. Deuce take the practice! But are you so sure of this?

Burgomaster. The Householders' Association is sending round a circular from house to house, in which all well-disposed citizens are called upon not to employ you, and I dare swear that not a single father of a family will venture to refuse his signature; he simply *dare* not.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, well; I don't doubt that. But what then?

Burgomaster. If I might give you a piece of advice, it would be this—to go away for a time.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, I've had some thought of leaving this place.

Burgomaster. Good. When you've done so, and have had six months of reflection, then if, after mature consideration, you could make up your mind to acknowledge your error in a few words of regret——

Dr. Stockmann. I might perhaps be re-instated, you think?

Burgomaster. Perhaps; it is not absolutely impossible.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, but how about public opinion? You daren't on account of public opinion.

Burgomaster. Opinions are extremely variable things. And, to speak candidly, it is of the greatest importance for us to have such an admission from you.

Dr. Stockmann. Then you may whistle for it! You remember well enough, d—n it, what I've said to you before about these foxes' tricks!

Burgomaster. At that time your position was infinitely more favourable; at that time you might have supposed you had the whole town at your back——

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, and now I feel I've the whole town on my back. [*Flaring up.*] But no—not if I had the devil himself and his grandmother on my back—never—never, I tell you!

Burgomaster. The father of a family must not act as you are doing; you must not, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. Must not! There is but one thing on earth that a free man must not do, and do you know what that is?

Burgomaster. No.

Dr. Stockmann. Of course not; but I will tell you. A free man must not behave like a blackguard; he must not so act that he would spit in his own face.

Burgomaster. That really sounds extremely plausible; and if there were not another explanation of your mulish obstinacy—but we know well enough there——

Dr. Stockmann. What do you mean by that?

Burgomaster. I'm sure you understand. But as your brother, and as a man of common-sense, I give you this advice: don't build too confidently upon prospects and expectations that perhaps may fail you utterly.

Dr. Stockmann. But what on earth are you driving at?

Burgomaster. Do you really want to make me believe that you are ignorant of the provisions Master Tanner Kiil has made in his will?

Dr. Stockmann. I know that the little he has is to go to a home for old indigent working-men. But what's that got to do with me?

Burgomaster. To begin with, it is not a "little" we're speaking of. Tanner Kiil is a fairly wealthy man.

Dr. Stockmann. I've never had any idea of that!

Burgomaster. Hm! Really? Then you hadn't any idea either that a not inconsiderable portion of his fortune is to go to your children, and that you and your wife are to enjoy the interest on it for life. Hasn't he told you that?

Dr. Stockmann. No, on my soul! On the contrary, he was constantly grumbling because he was so preposterously over-taxed. But are you really so sure of this, Peter?

Burgomaster. I had it from a thoroughly reliable source.

Dr. Stockmann. But, good Heavens! Why, then, Katrine is all right—and the children too! Oh! I must tell her—— [*Calls.*] Katrine, Katrine!

Burgomaster [*restraining him*]. Hush! don't say anything about it yet.

Mrs. Stockmann [*opening the door*]. What is it?

Dr. Stockmann. Nothing, my dear, go in again. [Mrs. Stockmann *closes the door. He walks up and down.*] Provided for! Only think—all of them provided for! And that for life! After all it is a pleasant sensation to feel yourself secure!

Burgomaster. Yes, but it is not exactly so—you are not. Tanner Kiil can annul his testament at any day or hour he chooses.

Dr. Stockmann. But he won't do that, my good Peter. The badger is immensely delighted that I've attacked you and your wiseacre friends.

Burgomaster [*stops and looks searchingly at him*]. Aha! that throws a new light upon a good many matters.

Dr. Stockmann. What matters?

Burgomaster. So the whole affair has been a combined manœuvre. These violent, restless attacks which you, in the name of truth, have launched against the leading men of the town.

Dr. Stockmann. What, what?

Burgomaster. So this was nothing but a preconcerted return for that vindictive old Morten Kiil's will.

Dr. Stockmann [*almost speechless*]. Peter—you're the most abominable plebeian I've ever known in my life.

Burgomaster. Everything is over between us. Your dismissal is irrevocable—for now we have a weapon against you. [*Exit.*]

Dr. Stockmann. Shame! shame! shame! [*Calls.*] Katrine! The floor must be scrubbed after him! Tell her to come here with a pail—what's her name?—confound it—the girl with the sooty nope——

Mrs. Stockmann [*in the sitting-room*]. Hush, hush! Thomas!

Petra [*also in the doorway*]. Father, here's grandfather, and he wants to know if he can speak to you alone.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, of course he can. [*By the door.*] Come in, father-in-law. [*Enter* MORTEN KIIL. DR. STOCKMANN *closes the door behind him.*] Well, what is it? Sit you down.

Morten Kill. I'll not sit down. [*Looking about him*]. It looks cheerful here to-day, Stockmann.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, doesn't it?

Morten Kiil. Sure enough it does: and you've plenty of fresh air, too; I should think you'd have enough of that oxygen you chattered about so much yesterday. You must have an awfully good conscience to-day, I should think.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, I have.

Morten Kiil. So I should suppose. [*Striking himself upon the heart.*] But do you know what I've got here?

Dr. Stockmann. Well, a good conscience, too, I hope.

Morten Kiil. Pshaw! No, something far better than that.

[*Takes out a large pocket-book, opens it, and shows a mass of papers.*]

Dr. Stockmann [*looking at him in astonishment*]. Shares in the Baths!

Morten Kiil. They weren't difficult to get to-day.

Dr. Stockmann. And you've been and bought these up——?

Morten Kiil. All I'd got the money to pay for.

Dr. Stockmann. But, my dear father-in-law,—just now, when the Baths are in such straits.

Morten Kiil. If you behave like a reasonable creature you can set the Baths going again.

Dr. Stockmann. Ay, why you can see for yourself that I'm doing all I can. But the people of this town are mad!

Morten Kiil. You said yesterday that the worst filth came from my tannery. Now, if that's really the truth, then my grandfather, and my father before me, and I myself have all these years been littering the town like three destroying angels. Do you think I'll let such a stain remain upon me?

Dr. Stockmann. Unfortunately, you can't help yourself now.

Morten Kiil. No, thanks. I stand for my good name and my rights. I have heard that the people call me "badger." Well, the badger is a swinish sort of animal, but they shall never be able to say that of me. I will live and die a clean man.

Dr. Stockmann. And how will you manage *that*?

Morten Kiil. You shall make me clean, Stockmann.

Dr. Stockmann. I!

Morten Kiil. Do you know with what money I've bought these shares? No, you can't know, but now I'll tell you. It's the money Katrine and Petra and the little lads will

have after me. Yes, for you see, I've invested my little all to the best advantage anyhow.

Dr. Stockmann [*flaring up*]. And you've thrown away Katrine's money like this!

Morten Kiil. O yes; the whole of the money is entirely invested in the Baths now. And now I shall really see if you're so possessed—demented—mad, Stockmann. Now, if you go on letting this dirt and filth result from my tannery, it'll be just the same as if you were to flay Katrine with a whip—and Petra too, and the little lads. But no decent father of a family would ever do that—unless, indeed, he were a madman.

Dr. Stockmann [*walking up and down*]. Yes, but I *am* a madman; I *am* a madman!

Morten Kiil. But I suppose you're not so stark mad where your wife and bairns are concerned.

Dr. Stockmann [*standing in front of him*]. Why on earth didn't you speak to me before you went and bought all that rubbish?

Morten Kiil. What's done can't be undone.

Dr. Stockmann [*walking about uneasily*]. If only I weren't so certain about the affair! But I'm thoroughly convinced that I'm right!

Morten Kiil [*weighing the pocket-book in his hand*]. If you stick to your madness these aren't worth much.

[*Puts book into his pocket.*]

Dr. Stockmann. But, deuce take it! surely science will be able to find some remedy, some antidote.

Morten Kiil. Do you mean something to kill the animals?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, or at least to make them innocuous.

Morten Kiil. Can't you try rat's-bane.

Dr. Stockmann. Tush! Tush! But all the people say it is nothing but fancy! Let them have their own way, then! Haven't the ignorant, narrow-hearted curs reviled me for an enemy of the people;—and did not they try to tear the clothes from off my back!

Morten Kiil. And they've smashed all the windows for you, too!

Dr. Stockmann. Then, too, one's duty to one's family. I must talk it over with Katrine; she is such a stickler in matters of this sort.

Morten Kiil. That's right! You just follow the advice of a sensible woman.

Dr. Stockmann [*going to him angrily*]. How could you act so perversely! Staking Katrine's money and getting me into this horribly painful dilemma! I tell you that when I look at you I seem to see the devil himself——!

Morten Kiil. Then I'd better be off. But you must let me know your decision by two o'clock. If it's *no*, all the shares go to the Charity—and that this very day.

Dr. Stockmann. And what does Katrine get?

Morten Kiil. Not a brass farthing. [*The door of the ante-room opens.* MR. HOVSTAD *and* ASLAKSEN *are seen outside it.*] Do you see these two there?

Dr. Stockmann [*staring at them*]. What! And they actually dare to come to me here!

Hovstad. Why, of course we do.

Aslaksen. You see there is something we want to talk to you about.

Morten Kiil [*whispers.*] Yes or no—by two o'clock.

Aslaksen [*with a glance at Hovstad.*] Aha!

(*Exit* MORTEN KIIL.)

Dr. Stockmann. Well, what is it you want with me? Be brief.

Hovstad. I can very well understand that you resent our conduct at the meeting yesterday——

Dr. Stockmann. And that's what you call conduct! Yes, it was charming conduct! I call it misconduct—disgraceful. Shame upon you!

Hovstad. Call it what you will; but we *could* not do otherwise.

Dr. Stockmann. You *dared* not, I suppose? Is not that so?

Hovstad. Yes, if you will have it.

Aslaksen. But why didn't you drop a word beforehand? Just the merest hint to Mr. Hovstad or to me?

Dr. Stockmann. A hint? What about?

Aslaksen. About what was at the bottom of it.

Dr. Stockmann. I don't in the least understand you.

Aslaksen [*nods familiarly*]. Oh! yes, you do, Dr. Stockmann.

Hovstad. It's no good concealing it any longer now.

Dr. Stockmann [*looking from one to the other*]. Yes; but in the devil's own name——!

Aslaksen. May I ask—isn't your father-in-law going about the town and buying up all the shares in the Baths?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, he has bought shares in the Baths to-day, but——

Aslaksen. It would have been wiser if you'd set somebody else to do that—someone not so closely connected with you.

Hovstad. And then you ought not to have appeared under your own name. No one need have known that the attack on the Baths came from you. You should have taken me into your counsels, Dr. Stockmann.

Dr. Stockmann [*stares straight in front of him; a light seems to break in upon him, and he looks thunder-stricken*]. Are such things possible? Can such things be?

Hovstad [*smiling*]. Well, we've seen they can. But you see it ought all to have been managed with finesse.

Hovstad. And then, too, you ought to have had several in it; for you know the responsibility is less for the individual when it is shared by others.

Dr. Stockmann [*calmly*]. In one word, gentlemen, what is it you want?

Aslaksen. Mr. Hovstad can best——

Hovstad. No, you explain, Aslaksen.

Aslasken. Well, it's this; now that we know how the whole matter stands, we believe we shall be able to place the *People's Messenger* at your disposal.

Dr. Stockmann. You dare do so, now? But how about public opinion? Aren't you afraid that a storm will burst out against us?

Hovstad. We must strive to ride out the storm.

Aslaksen. And the doctor try to manage his face-about with dexterity. As soon as your attack has produced its effect——

Dr. Stockmann. As soon as my father-in-law and I have bought up the shares at a low price, you mean.

Hovstad. No doubt it is scientific reasons principally that have impelled you to take over the direction of the Baths.

Dr. Stockmann. Of course; it was for scientific reasons that I made the old Badger go and buy up these shares. And then we'll tinker up the water-works a bit, and then dig about a bit by the shore down there, without it costing the town a half-crown. Don't you think that can be done? Hm?

Hovstad. I think so—if you have the *Messenger* to back you up.

Aslaksen. In a free society the press is a power, Doctor.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, indeed, and so is public opinion;

and you, Mr. Aslaksen—I suppose you'll be answerable for the Householders' Association?

Aslaksen. Both for the Association and the Moderation Society. You may rely upon that.

Dr. Stockmann. But, gentlemen—really I am quite ashamed to mention such a thing—but—what return?

Hovstad. Of course, you know we should be best pleased to give you our support for nothing. But the *Messenger* is not very firmly established; it is not getting on as it ought; and just now, that there is so much to be done in general politics, I should be very sorry to have to stop the paper.

Dr. Stockmann. Naturally; that would be very hard for a friend of the people like you. [*Flaring up.*] But I—I am an enemy of the people! [*Walking about the room.*] Wherever is my stick? Where the devil's my stick?

Hovstad. What do you mean?

Aslaksen. Surely you would not——

Dr. Stockmann [*standing still*]. And now, suppose I don't give you a single farthing out of all my shares? You must remember that we rich folk don't like parting with our money.

Hovstad. And *you* must remember that this business of the shares can be represented in two ways.

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, you're the man for that; if I don't come to the rescue of the *Messenger*, you'll certainly see the affair in an evil light; you'll hunt me down, I suppose—bait me, try to strangle me as the dog does the hare.

Hovstad. That is a law of nature—every animal wishes to live.

Aslaksen. And must take its food where he can find it, you know.

Dr. Stockmann. Then, go and see if you can't find some out there in the gutter [*rushes about the room*]; for now, by

Heaven! we'll see which is the strongest animal of us three. [*Finds umbrella and swings it.*] Now, look here——

Hovstad. You surely don't mean to use violence to us!

Aslaksen. I say, take care of that umbrella!

Dr. Stockmann. Out at the window with you, Mr. Hovstad!

Hovstad [*by the door of the ante-room*]. Are you quite mad?

Dr. Stockmann. Out at the window, Mr. Aslaksen! Jump, I tell you! As well first as last.

Aslaksen [*running round the writing-table*]. Be moderate, doctor. I'm a delicate man; I can stand so little. [*Screams*]. Help! help!

[MRS. STOCKMANN, PETRA, *and* HORSTER *enter from sitting-room.*]

Mrs. Stockmann. Good Heavens! Thomas, whatever is the matter?

Dr. Stockmann [*brandishing the umbrella*]. Jump out, I tell you. Out into the gutter.

Hovstad. An assault upon a defenceless man! I call you to witness, Captain Horster.

[*Rushes off through the sitting-room.*]

Aslaksen [*at his wit's end*]. If only I knew the local conditions——

[*He slinks out through the sitting-room door.*]

Mrs. Stockmann [*holding back the doctor*]. Now, do restrain yourself, Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann [*throwing down umbrella*]. On my soul, they've got off after all.

Mrs. Stockmann. But what do they want with you?

Dr. Stockmann. You shall hear that later; I've other

matters to think of now. [*Goes to table and writes on a card.*] Look here, Katrine, what's written here?

Mrs. Stockmann. Three big *Noes*; what is that?

Dr. Stockmann. That, too, you shall learn later. [*Handing card.*] There, Petra; let the girl run to the Badger's with this as fast as she can. Be quick!

[PETRA *goes out through the ante-room with the card.*]

Dr. Stockmann. Well, if I haven't had visits to-day from all the emissaries of the devil, I don't know! But now I'll sharpen my pen against them till it is a dagger; I will dip it into venom and gall; I'll hurl my inkstand straight at their skulls.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, but we're to go away, Thomas!

[PETRA *returns.*]

Dr. Stockmann. Well!

Petra. All right.

Dr. Stockmann. Good. Go away, do you say? No, I'll be damned if we do; we stay where we are, Katrine.

Petra. Stay!

Mrs Stockmann. Here in the town?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, here; here is the field of battle; here it shall be fought; here I will conquer! Now, as soon as my trousers are sewn up I'll go out into the town and look after a house, for we must have a roof over our heads for the winter.

Horster. That you can have with me.

Dr. Stockmann. Can I?

Horster. Yes, indeed, you can. I've room enough, and, besides, I'm hardly ever at home.

Mrs. Stockmann. Ah! How good it is of you, Horster.

Petra. Thank you.

Dr. Stockmann [*holding out hand*]. Thanks, thanks! So

that trouble, too, is over. And this very day I shall start on my work in earnest. Ah! there is so much to root out here, Katrine! But it's a good thing I've all my time at my disposal now; yes, for you know I've had notice from the Baths.

Mrs. Stockmann [*sighing*]. Ah, yes! I was expecting that.

Dr. Stockmann. ——And now they want to take my practice in the bargain. But let them! The poor I shall keep anyhow—those who can't pay anything; and, good Lord! it's they who have most need of me. But, by Heaven! I swear they shall hear me; I will preach to them in season and out of season, as it is written somewhere.

Mrs. Stockmann. Dear Thomas, I fancy you've seen what good preaching does.

Dr. Stockmann. You really are ridiculous, Katrine. Should I let myself be beaten off the field by public opinion, and the compact majority, and such devilry? No, thanks. Besides, what I want is so simple, so clear and straightforward. I only want to drive into the heads of these curs that the Liberals are the worst foes of free men; that party-programmes wring the necks of all young living truths; that considerations of expediency turn morality and righteousness upside down, until life is simply hideous. Yes, Captain Horster, don't you think I shall be able to make the people understand *that?*

Horster. Maybe; I don't know much about such matters myself.

Dr. Stockmann. Well, you see—now you shall hear! It is the party-leaders who must be got rid of. For you see, a party-leader is just like a wolf—like a starving wolf; if he is to exist at all he needs so many small beasts a-year. Just look at Hovstad and Aslaksen! How many

small beasts do not they devour; or else they mangle them and knock them about, so that they're fit for nothing else but householders and subscribers to the *People's Messenger*. [*Sits on edge of table*]. Now, Katrine, just come here; see how bravely the sun shines to-day. And the blessed fresh spring air, too, blowing in upon me.

Mrs. Stockmann. Yes, if only we could live on sunshine and spring air, Thomas!

Dr. Stockmann. Well, you'll have to pinch and save where you can—then it'll be all right. That's my least concern. Now what does trouble me is, that I don't see any man free and brave enough to dare to take up my work after me.

Petra. Ah! don't think of that, father. You have time before you. Why, see, there are the boys already.

[*Ejlif and Morten enter from the sitting-room.*

Mrs. Stockmann. Have you had a holiday to-day?

Morten. No; but we had a fight with the other fellows in the play-time——

Ejlif. That's not true; it was the other fellows who fought us.

Morten. Yes, and so Mr. Rörlund said it would be best if we stayed at home for a few days.

Dr. Stockmann [*snapping his fingers and springing down from the table*]. Now I have it, now I have it, on my soul! Never shall you set foot in school again!

The boys. Never go to school!

Mrs. Stockmann. But really, Thomas——

Dr. Stockmann. Never, I say. I'll teach you myself—that is to say, I'll not teach you any blessed thing.

Morten. Hurrah!

Dr. Stockmann. —— ——but I'll make free, noble-

minded men of you. Look here, you'll have to help me, Petra.

Petra. Yes, father, you may be sure I will.

Dr. Stockmann. And we'll have our school in the room where they reviled me as an enemy of the people. But we must have more pupils. I must have at least twelve boys to begin with.

Mrs. Stockmann. You'll never get them here in this town.

Dr. Stockmann. We shall see that. [*To the boys.*] Don't you know any street-boys—some regular ragamuffins——?

Morten. Yes, father, I know lots!

Dr. Stockmann. That's all right; bring me a few specimens of them. I want to experiment with the good-for-nothings for once—there may be some good heads amongst them.

Morten. But what are we to do when we've become free and noble-minded men?

Dr. Stockmann. Drive all the wolves out to the far west, boys.

[EJLIF *looks rather doubtful;* MORTEN *jumps about, shouting* *hurrah*!]

Mrs. Stockmann. If only the wolves don't drive you out, Thomas.

Dr. Stockmann. You are quite mad, Katrine! Drive me away! now that I'm the strongest man in the town.

Mrs. Stockmann. The strongest—now?

Dr. Stockmann. Yes, I dare to say so bold a word; that now I'm one of the strongest men upon earth.

Morten. I say, father!

Dr. Stockmann [*in a subdued voice*]. Hush! you must not speak about it yet; but I have made a great discovery.

Mrs. Stockmann. What, again?

Dr. Stockmann. Assuredly. [*Gathers them about him, and speaks confidently*]. You see, the fact is that the strongest man upon earth is he who stands most alone.

Mrs. Stockmann [*shakes her head smiling*]. Ah! Thomas——!

Petra [*taking his hands trustfully*]. Father!

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